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CENTURY

by J. H. Thomas

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OF LONDON

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A CENTURY OF CITY GOVERNMENT

MANCHESTER 1838-1938

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MANCHESTER IN 1838

A. CENTURY OF CITY GOVERNMENT

MANCHESTER 1838-1938

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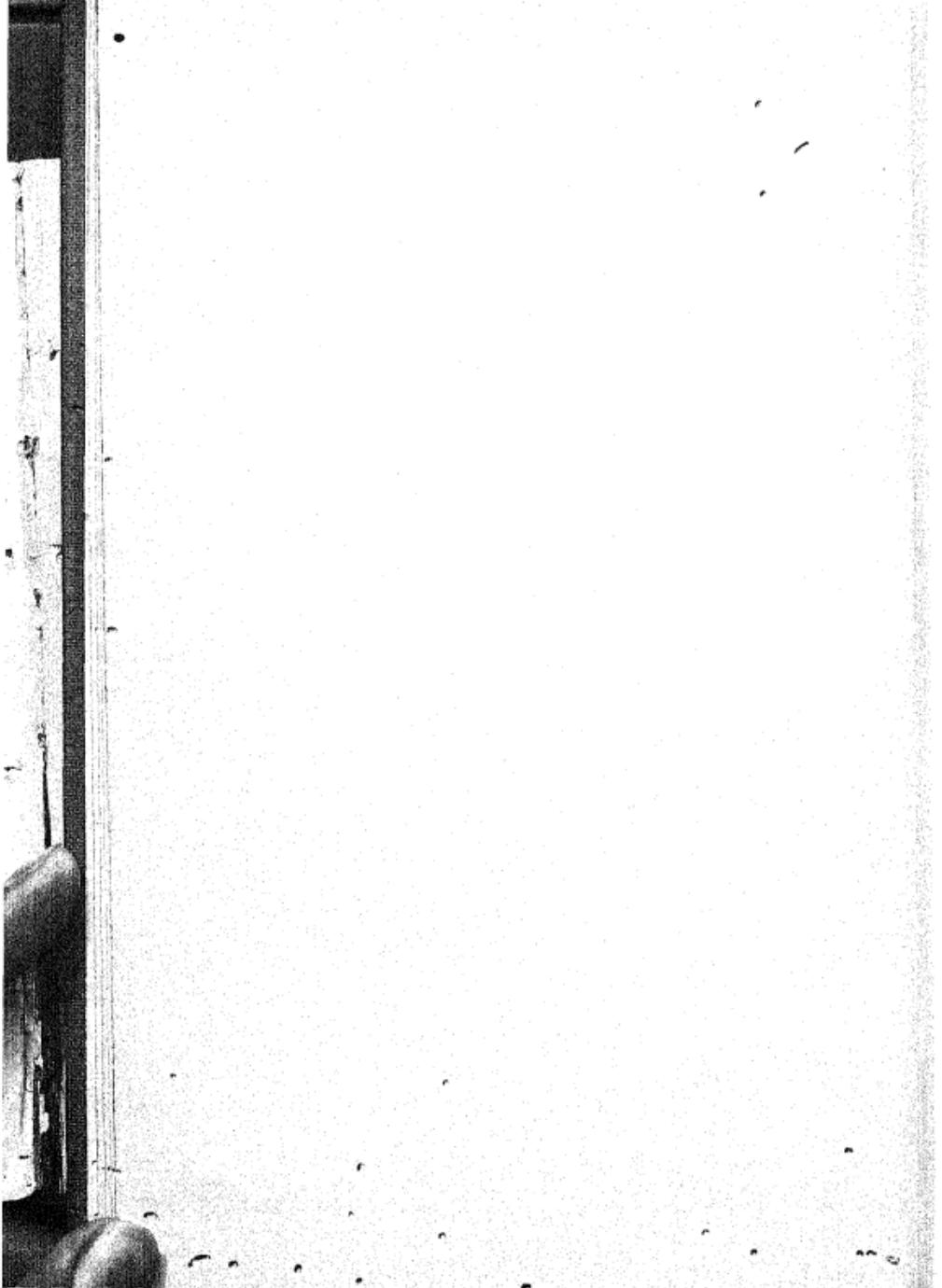
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TO

MRS. SIDNEY WEBB
(BEATRICE POTTER)

grand-niece of the first Mayor of Manchester
who, in partnership with her husband,
laid the foundations of a
science of local
government.



PREFACE

THIS book, in spite of its title, is not a history but an interpretation. I am not an historian, but I have been a member of the Manchester City Council for nine years,¹ and, in the light of that experience, I have tried to describe how the Council of to-day has evolved from that of 1838.

Local Government has, in the years that have passed since 1835, become so complicated that it seems to me that the day has gone by when it can be treated as one subject, except superficially. There are two ways in which it can be studied, the horizontal and the vertical. Problems such as areas, the municipal civil service, the relation between the central and local government, the respective functions of elected councillors and officials, the control of public utilities, etc., can be studied over the country as a whole—this I call the horizontal method. Or separate units can be taken, county boroughs, county councils, urban district councils, etc., and their development studied, so that it may be possible to reach conclusions about the different forms of government.

Before either method can be applied, many individual studies will be necessary. The Sidney Webbs, in their monumental volumes on local government between 1689 and 1835, based their conclusions on the study of innumerable local units. Students of local government since 1835 seem to have abandoned this method in favour of general descriptive studies of public health, education, housing, etc. But because of the peculiar nature of local government in England, an Act of Parliament means something different in almost every area—and then there are all the local Acts which make local differences, and often lead the way to general legislation.

I have tried to describe the development of local government in Manchester from the date of the charter to the present day, its reaction to general legislation, and the chief points of its local legislation. I am fully conscious of the book's shortcomings, but I hope that it will be followed by similar studies of other local

¹ During that time I served as Deputy-Chairman and Chairman of the Education Committee and of the Wythenshawe Special Committee, and I was also a member of the Finance and the Cleansing Committees.

government units. If so, the material will be available from which the future Mr. and Mrs. Webb—if indeed nature can be expected to reproduce so unique a combination—can draw conclusions from the experience of the hundred years since the Municipal Corporations Act.

There are many gaps. Space has prevented me from dealing with all the departments of the Corporation, or with all the activities of each department. Baths and washhouses have had to be left out, also sanitary inspection, shops and workshops inspection, adulteration of food, paving, blind persons' welfare, the fire brigade, airport, etc. I have tried to choose those sides of municipal work that best illustrate the development of the last hundred years. Neither have I attempted to give a description of the present position of the services. Those are excellently presented in the annual publication, *The City of Manchester*.

Only occasionally have I made comparisons between Manchester and other cities, and my aim has been to show her in a truthful rather than in a particularly favourable light. With all her faults—and the worst are those that leap to the eye—I am so passionately convinced that there is no other city in the country that is her equal, that to suggest that she needs whitewashing—except literally!—would seem a sheer impertinence.

I have many to thank for help with this book. All the officials to whom I applied for help, from the Town Clerk to the men who carried up the heavy rate books from the cellars in Princess Street, have given it most generously, although I must often have bothered them at inopportune moments. It is, I suppose, hardly necessary to say that I alone am responsible for any and all of the opinions that I have so freely expressed and that, as I have not submitted all my facts for verification, I am responsible for any mistakes.

To the Libraries Committee I want to express my deep gratitude. For comfort and convenience, the separate rooms at the disposal of research students in the Central Library are excellent, and the staff, whether in the Special Collections Section or in the General Reference Library, have spared no pains during the last three years to hunt for the books, papers and pamphlets they knew that I wanted, and to suggest others that might throw light on my problems.

Mr. A. P. Wadsworth, Dr. Radford, Mrs. Barbara Hammond, Dr. Ivor Jennings, and Mr. A. W. Balmer (a member of the Central

Valuation Committee) have given me valuable advice and most welcome encouragement. Members of the staff of the Economics Department at Manchester University have helped me with special problems, and friends and acquaintances, members of the council, and retired officials, have ransacked their memories and their family archives for my benefit.

I wish to thank Mr. E. C. E. Leadbitter of the Privy Council Office for his courtesy in facilitating access to the Reports of Captain Jebb to the Privy Council in 1838, which are among the archives of the Privy Council Office. These reports shed much interesting light on the course of the fight for the charter.

I am indebted to Miss Marion Fitzgerald—who has much experience of public health work—for the sections of Part III, Chapter I, dealing with the death rate, infectious diseases, smoke abatement, maternity and child welfare; to the City Surveyor and the Housing Director for the maps; and to the Medical Officer of Health for permission to print Tables I and II in Appendix II.

An article on the history of the municipal franchise which I contributed to the *Journal of Public Administration* is, by kind permission of the editor, reprinted as Appendix I.

Without the extremely able assistance of Mrs. Burnett, B.A. Admin., the book could never have been written, and I am grateful to my secretary, Miss Lowe, for her devoted work.

But the person who is primarily responsible for this book, whether or not he is prepared to accept it, is my husband. He brought me to Manchester twenty-five years ago, helped me to get on to the City Council, and has "aided and abetted" me in all my public work. Anyone who has read his books on municipal matters will realize how much this one owes to him.

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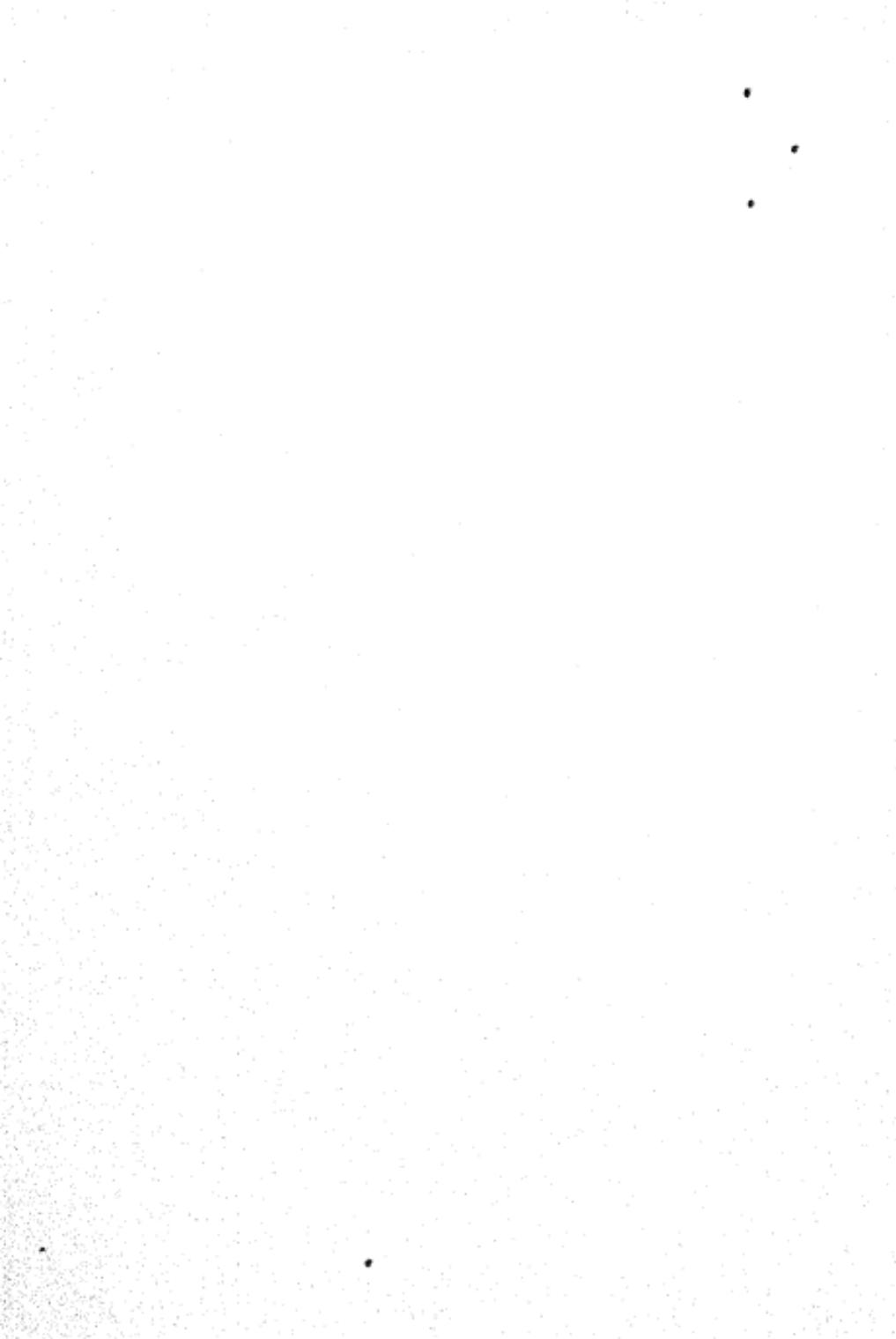
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PART I



CHAPTER I

MANCHESTER IN 1838

MANCHESTER, in 1838, was the name of the large township with a population of about 180,000, which was the centre of a great agglomeration, including the surrounding townships that became united with it in the municipal borough, Salford across the river Irwell, and the cluster of neighbouring manufacturing towns—Oldham, Bury, Bolton, Rochdale, etc. Within a distance of twelve miles, or an hour's ride on horseback, there was a population of nearly a million people—larger than the population round London at that time.

"What more surprising than the increase of Manchester itself? At the commencement of the [eighteenth] century, Manchester was a town of little dealers and manufacturers who brought unbleached fabrics to Bolton, dyed them, and then hawked them upon horseback, from market to market. . . . The manufacturers lived with extreme economy, and laboured and fared in company with their servants. A brick house was considered quite a luxury. Manufacture was, strictly speaking, scattered in the huts and cottages of the peasants. The weaver was a sort of domestic manufacturer, who bought his yarn when his family was not able to furnish it, and sold it when woven for a price which remunerated him for the labour and outlay which he had incurred. Manufacturers at Manchester were limited to dyeing and dressing, and beyond this the capitalist was nothing more than the Lyons capitalist of the present day, viz. a taker-in of goods from the weavers, and a merchant in the disposal of them."¹

The introduction of the steam engine to a district rich in coal brought about the transformation. In the years between 1821 and 1831 the population of Manchester increased by 34.5 per cent, whereas the increase for all England between 1801 and 1851 never exceeded 18 per cent in any decennial period.² The high wages in

¹ *Manchester in 1844*, by M. Leon Faucher, p. 11.

² See *Four Periods of Public Education*, by Kay-Shuttleworth, p. 150.

the factories drew labour from the agricultural districts—especially when a bad harvest, as in 1836, raised the price of bread¹—and from Ireland.

The wealth produced in this, the most important of the new industrial areas, and the means by which it was produced seemed to foreigners who visited England, no less than to Englishmen themselves, something portentous.

The courage and enterprise of the Lancashire men who had tamed this new power so that it brought them wealth and took their goods all over the world, was soon recognized, but that the manufacturing system brought evil as well as good was not realized until later. A French observer, comparing Manchester with his own towns, far less advanced industrially at that time, pointed out that in France industry was grafted upon a pre-existent state of society. Mulhausen, Lyons, Rouen, had, before it arrived, all the elements which form a society, whereas "at Manchester, industry has found no previous occupant, and knows nothing but itself. Everything is alike, and everything is new; there is nothing but masters and operatives."²

The lack of practically any regulations except those necessary for governing a village or a small town was responsible for the abuses that were the inevitable result of an unbridled desire to make money. A population, uprooted from their country homes and associations, was plunged into uncontrolled urban conditions of overcrowded, insanitary houses, with few of the civilizing influences of schools or churches or opportunity for healthy recreation after the long hours of work in the mills. The Lancashire industrial system which was giving England the first place in the trade of the world brought with it terrible abuses which, at the time of which we write, were beginning to be disclosed by means of Parliamentary Commissions and local inquiries. If, to the Frenchman—whose observations were not perhaps altogether untouched by envy—and to the German, Frederick Engels, who came to Manchester as a young man in 1842, the abuses of the manufacturing system seemed so obvious, it is only fair to remember that much of their knowledge of those conditions came from reports of surveys carried out, as in Manchester, by the business men themselves.

In 1838 the township of Manchester consisted of factories, ware-

¹ The Corn Laws were not repealed until 1846.

² Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

houses, offices, shops in Market Street and a mass of working-class houses. The factories bordered the rivers and canals, and the business part of the town was round Cannon Street and High Street. Portland Street then only had one warehouse. Mosley Street, with George Street and Faulkner Street, still retained some of its character as a residential quarter, the dwelling-house being united with a warehouse, although the latter had a separate entrance. Richard Cobden lived here when he first came to Manchester.¹ It was a favourite promenade on Sunday mornings after service, and the mother of one of our present Aldermen² used to tell how, as a child, she looked out of the windows and saw men in the "trousers" which had just become the fashion, walking up and down. Old Dr. Dalton, the famous scientist who lived in Faulkner Street, was often to be seen in his Quaker dress and silk stockings. Owing to colour-blindness he often wore a grey and a blue stocking at the same time. But the gentry were moving from Mosley Street to Broughton, Pendleton and Cheetham in the north, to Ardwick and Chorlton-on-Medlock and, later, to Hulme in the south. These latter townships were the homes also of the better-paid operatives. The worst paid—amongst whom were to be numbered the handloom weavers, now being slowly starved out of existence by the power looms, and the mass of Irish, more improvident than the native English, and bringing with them the much lower standards of life to which they had become accustomed in their native land—lived in the township of Manchester. In Holt town, St. George's Fields (Collyhurst), and Little Ireland—by the Medlock in Oxford Street—lived between thirty and fifty thousand Irish.

Round the central commercial area of about half a mile square, "factories, seven stories in height, rear their lofty fronts along the banks of the Irwell, and along the borders of the canals, which, penetrating into the town, form an interior navigation. The waters of the Irk, black and fetid as they are, supply numerous tanneries and dye-works; those of the Medlock supply calico-printing establishments, machine shops, and foundries. . . . Descending from the hill where the workhouse is situated, you come to the buildings of the College, the Old Church, and the Exchange, and upon the other side, the Court of Sessions and also the Gaol. . . . There are

¹ By 1838 he had turned his house into a warehouse and moved to Quay Street, now the office of the County Court.

² Alderman Birley.

no great boulevards or heights to aid the eye in measuring the vast extent of the surface which it occupies. It is distinguished neither by those contrasting features which mark the cities of the middle ages, nor by that regularity which characterizes the capitals of recent formation. There is perhaps good reason for complaint that too little attention has been paid to the health and convenience of the inhabitants; of the want of public squares, fountains, trees, promenades, and well-ventilated buildings; but it is certain that it would be a difficult task to devise a plan by which the various products of Industry could be more concentrated, or by which the manufactures could be brought nearer to the fuel which feeds them, or more accessible to facilities for disposing of the goods when manufactured. . . . The canals pass under the streets, and thread their sinuous way in every direction, conveying boatloads of coal to the doors of the manufactories, and even to the very mouths of the furnaces."¹

Certainly little thought had been given to the "health and convenience of the inhabitants." The Police Commissioners² and the Highway Surveyors³ had limited powers, and although the main and some of the side streets were paved and drained, the innumerable small streets, alleys, and courts in which the working-class houses were built were unpaved and undrained. But mud and stagnant water, however unpleasant, were the lesser evils with which the inhabitants had to contend. There was then no system of sanitation, no water laid on to houses—an occasional tap in the street or a polluted well were the sources of supply. For domestic and human refuse there were privy middens which combined the functions of a water-closet with that of an ashbin. These were few and far between, were seldom emptied, and were so completely inadequate to the needs of the crowded houses that the court or alley became the depository of what the writers of the times describe as "excrementitious matter."

The merchants who lived in Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick, Cheetham Hill, or Pendleton, lived in villas with gardens, "in free wholesome, country air, in fine comfortable houses . . . and the finest part of the arrangement is this, that the members of this monied aristocracy can take the shortest road through the middle of all the labouring districts to their places of business without ever

¹ Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

² See below, p. 51.

³ See below, p. 55.

seeing that they are in the midst of the grimy misery that lurks to the right and to the left."¹

One did not need to be a Communist to be struck by the division between the rich and the poor and between the great wealth which the workers were helping to create and the poverty and misery in which they lived.

We owe much of our knowledge of the working-class districts of the township of Manchester in the thirties to Dr. Kay—later Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth. Attached to the Dispensary in Ancoats, he was familiar with the dwellings of the people whom he attended for typhus, typhoid, and the other fevers that were then never wholly absent from the town. In 1831 Asiatic cholera was reported to be on its way to England. The Privy Council, in June of that year, set up a Consultative Board of Health, which drew up regulations for local boards, and communications were sent to the chief magistrates, clergymen, and doctors all over England. In Manchester a local Board of Health was formed in November 1831, with Dr. Kay as secretary. No one at that time knew the origin of cholera or the method by which infection was carried, but his previous experience in Edinburgh, Dublin, and Ancoats led him to suggest to the Board a thorough inquiry into the sanitary state of the crowded parts of the town. He was sure that insanitary conditions affected the health of the inhabitants and made them more liable to disease. A questionnaire was drawn up about houses, cellars, drains in the street, number of inhabitants, etc., and the survey was conducted by members of the fourteen district Boards of Health that had been set up, one in each of the police divisions of the town. These members were the leading people of the community, and Dr. Kay later confessed that, "in framing these questions, and moving the Board of Health to confide the investigations to the most intelligent and wealthy inhabitants, I had a double object in view. I wished to bring under the notice of the chief merchants and manufacturers the condition of the streets, courts and houses of that part of the town in which the poor dwelt. The report would, I knew, be faithful; and as it would proceed from an indisputable authority, it would be a sure basis of future municipal improvement."²

His lesson was not lost on Thomas Potter and Joseph Heron,

¹ *The Condition of the Working Classes in England*, by F. Engels, p. 46.

² *Four Periods of Public Education*, by Kay-Shuttleworth, p. 88.

both members of the Board of Health. Although twelve years had to pass before the new Town Council was established and able to turn its attention to questions of health, the Manchester Police Act of 1844, in many of its sections, was the fruit of the experience gained by those two men, one of whom became the first Mayor and the other the first Town Clerk.

Dr. Kay's own report, based on these surveys and on his knowledge of the lives of the poor, "made a deep and melancholy impression on the public mind."¹ It was "one of the cardinal documents of Victorian history. For the first time the actual condition of a great urban population was exposed to view."²

We cannot do better than give the description in his own words:³ "Near the centre of the town, a mass of buildings, inhabited by prostitutes and thieves, is intersected by narrow and loathsome streets, and close courts, defiled with refuse. . . . In Parliament-street, there is only one privy for three hundred and eighty inhabitants, which is placed in a narrow passage, whence its effluvia infest the adjacent houses, and must prove a most fertile source of disease. . . . In Parliament-passage about thirty houses have been erected. . . . These thirty houses have one privy. . . .

"The state of the streets and houses in that part of No. 4 district included between Store-street and Travis-street, and London Road, is exceedingly wretched—especially those built on some irregular and broken mounds of clay, on a steep declivity descending into Store-street. These narrow avenues are rough irregular gullies, down which filthy streams percolate; and the inhabitants are crowded in dilapidated abodes, or obscure and damp cellars, in which it is impossible for the health to be preserved.

"Unwilling to weary the patience of the reader by extending such disgusting details, it may suffice to refer generally to the wretched state of the habitations of the poor in Clay-street, and the lower portion of Pot-street; in Portugal-street; in Back Hart-street and many of the courts in the neighbourhood of Portland-street, some of which are not more than a yard and a quarter wide, and contain houses, frequently three stories high, the lowest of which stories is occasionally used as a receptacle of excrementitious matter."

¹ Faucher, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

² *Victorian England—Portrait of an Age*, by G. M. Young, p. 26.

³ *Four Periods of Public Education*, by Kay-Shuttleworth, *passim*.

"In some districts of the town exist evils so remarkable as to require more minute description. A portion of low, swampy ground, liable to be frequently inundated, and to constant exhalation, is included between a high bank over which the Oxford Road passes, and a bend of the river Medlock where its course is impeded by a weir. This unhealthy spot lies so low that the chimneys of its houses, some of them three stories high, are little above the level of the road. About two hundred of these habitations are crowded together in an extremely narrow space, and they are chiefly inhabited by the lowest Irish. Many of these houses have also cellars, whose floor is scarcely elevated above the level of the water flowing in the Medlock. The soughs are destroyed, or out of repair; and these narrow abodes are in consequence always damp, and are frequently flooded to the depth of several inches, because the surface water can find no exit. This district has sometimes been the haunt of hordes of thieves, and desperadoes who defied the law, and is always inhabited by a class resembling savages in their appetites and habits. It is surrounded on every side by some of the largest factories of the town, whose chimneys vomit forth dense clouds of smoke, which hang heavily over this insalubrious region."

This was the district known as "Little Ireland" because of the large number of Irish who lived there.

"The privies are in a most disgraceful state, inaccessible from filth, and too few for the accommodation of the number of people—the average number being two to two hundred and fifty people. The upper rooms are, with a few exceptions, very dirty, and the cellars much worse; all damp, and some occasionally overflowed. The cellars consist of two rooms on a floor, each nine to ten feet square, some inhabited by ten persons, others by more: in many, the people have no beds, and keep each other warm by close stowage in shavings, straw, etc.; a change of linen or clothes is an exception to the common practice. Many of the back rooms where they sleep have no other means of ventilation than from the front rooms."

"The houses of the poor, especially throughout the whole of the Districts Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, are too generally built back to back,¹ having therefore only one outlet, no yard, no privy, and no

¹ With one wall for two rows of houses, so that each row of houses had front entrances only.

receptacle for refuse. Consequently the narrow unpaved streets, in which mud and water stagnate, become the common receptacles of offal and ordure. Often low, damp, ill-ventilated cellars exist beneath the houses. . . . The streets, in the district where the poor reside, are generally unsewered, and the drainage is consequently superficial. The houses are often built with a total neglect of order, on the summit of natural irregularities of the surface, or on mounds left at the side of artificial excavations on the brick grounds, with which these parts of the town abound."

There were about 15,000 people living in cellars. These were the poorest of the population, handloom weavers and old people. "The condition of a very large proportion of these dwellings beneath the level of unsewered streets was, to the last degree, insalubrious—it was often pestilential. I have sometimes, as a Dispensary physician, had to make my way to the bed of a patient suffering from typhus, by stepping from one brick to another placed for my convenience on the flagged floor, covered with some inches of water. This occurred to me twice in Little Ireland, where, on one of these occasions, nearly a whole family perished of typhus. The cellars were inundated during a flood in the Medlock. It occurred also in 'Irish Town' in the valley of the Irk; and during the prevalence of cholera I remember carrying away some bad cases in canvas slings, on the shoulders of hospital bearers, from flooded cellars not far from Knotmill."

Although as a result of the survey and of the outbreak of cholera which reached Manchester in June 1832 some of the streets were drained, some the filth cleared away and some of the worst houses whitewashed, the limited powers of the Police Commissioners,¹ on which Thomas Potter and others who were to form the first Council were serving, made any radical improvement impossible. Engels's account of conditions in 1844 shows how the description given by Dr. Kay ten years earlier was still true. In fact the increase in the population during those years had made matters worse.

In the oldest part of the town the front streets, which formerly housed a more comfortable section of the population, were backed by courts and lanes crowded together to which access could only be gained by covered passages, "in which no two human beings can pass at the same time." Every scrap of space left over from

¹ See below, p. 51.

the days* of more spacious building had been literally crammed with houses. On the south bank of the Irk, "right and left a multitude of covered passages lead from the main streets into numerous courts, and he who turns in thither gets into a filth and disgusting grime, the equal of which is not to be found. . . . In one of these courts there stands directly at the entrance, at the end of the covered passage, a privy without a door, so dirty that the inhabitants can pass in and out of the court only by passing through foul pools of stagnant urine and excrement. . . . At the bottom flows, or rather stagnates, the Irk, a narrow coal-black, foul-smelling stream, full of debris and refuse, which it deposits on the shallower right bank. . . . Above the bridge are tanneries, bone mills and gas works, from which all drains and refuse find their way into the Irk, which receives further the contents of all the neighbouring sewers and privies."¹

In the parts of the town by Withy Grove and Shudehill there was some sort of plan, long straight lanes, alleys, and courts, but built with no reference to one another so that they formed a tangled labyrinth. In the absence of any sanitation, not only were the courts and alleys the depository for domestic refuse and filth, but pigsties added to the squalor and stench. Even in the new parts of the town, wherever the speculative builder had left a small space uncovered the inhabitants let it out for pigsties. The pigs consumed some of the refuse.

Not only were houses built back to back, that is, with one wall to serve two houses facing on to different streets and with, therefore, no possibility of a back yard or of through ventilation for either house, but these back-to-back houses were often built round courts. Communication with the street was by covered passages, so that the air could not circulate freely. Speculative builders, untrammelled by regulations, certainly devised ingenious methods of housing the greatest number of people on the smallest possible piece of land.

If we have described at some length the conditions under which the working classes lived in the township of Manchester in 1838 —and the new cottage building in the out-townships, Hulme and Chorlton-on-Medlock, was, in default of any regulations, little better—it is because the working classes formed 70 per cent to 75 per cent of the population of that township.

¹ *The Condition of the Working Classes in England*, by F. Engels, p. 50.

What kind of life could be lived under these conditions?

Factory hours of work were long, twelve or more in the day, and even longer hours were worked in warehouses which were often open until ten o'clock at night.¹ Wages were good for the skilled worker when trade was good, a woman spinner earning 25s. a week; but in the 'thirties and 'forties "bad times" predominated, and there was no provision for unemployment but the poor law. The handloom weaver lived a wretched life of semi-starvation, only earning, when working fourteen hours a day, between 7s. and 8s. a week.

The working man's food consisted of tea or coffee and a little bread for breakfast—oatmeal porridge was rarely eaten. Boiled potatoes with melted lard or butter and occasionally a few pieces of fried bacon made up the dinner of the poorest; those who earned higher wages usually managed to get a little meat three times a week. For supper, which they took when they finally returned from the mills at 7 p.m. or later, they had tea with a little spirits and bread; sometimes oatmeal or potatoes were taken instead.² Whole families worked. Children, whose hours had been limited by the Factory Act of 1833, had to be nine years old before they could be employed, and, as they were supposed to attend a factory school for two hours a day, their actual working hours were eight. But the lack of schools and of efficient teachers made this provision of little use, and all other trades were unregulated.

Sunday schools were the chief civilizing influence, and two-thirds of the children between the ages of five and fifteen attended them for three or four hours on Sunday. Some children after working all day attended evening schools as well. It surprised the Frenchman, M. Faucher, that people should think "it natural, that a child, after having worked twelve hours, should be confined for two additional hours in a school, and that its attention should be continually on the strain, and without any other repose than the hours of sleep."³ But even so enlightened an employer as Mr. Robert Greg, who had provided model conditions for his work-people in the country village of Styal, when asked by a member of the Committee of Inquiry into the Employment of Children in 1833

¹ A half-holiday in offices and warehouses was not started until 1843.

² *Four Periods of Public Education*, by Kay-Shuttleworth, p. 7.

³ Faucher, p. 98.

if the children were disposed to go to the evening school after a long day's labour, and if they profited by the instruction there given, replied: "We have no examples of the contrary; we find that the children are much more fatigued, and less disposed to go to the evening school after a holiday than after a working day, and they always wish to go to bed earlier on Sundays."¹

There were a few day schools run by the religious societies, and many others run for private profit, to which some children went, very irregularly, until they could go to work. Parents who cared about giving their children some schooling, who could afford fees and who were prepared to go without their earnings, sent them until a later age, but at least a third of all the children went neither to a Sunday school nor to a day school, even for a short time.²

For those adult workers who wished to acquire more education than the three R's, which was all that they could get at the Sunday schools and evening schools, there was a Mechanics' Institute where lectures were given and a library provided. This was supported by subscriptions from the middle class, who were convinced that education would prevent riots and strikes by showing the worker that his interests were really the same as those of his employers.

Lyceums, as they were called, were another manifestation of this belief. There the education was less advanced than in the Mechanics' Institute, from which the College of Technology is descended, and was combined with more entertainment, by which means it was hoped to wean the working man from the public-house. The amount of excessive drinking horrified the foreign visitors and the middle-class employers.

An Act of 1830 had established free trade in beer. Under it, anyone whose name was on the rate book could, by paying a fee of two guineas to the Excise authority, open a beer shop without any necessity for a justices' licence, or any control by them. Spirits were sold in what were referred to as "Gin Palaces," the licences for which were generously granted. Dr. Kay calculated that there were a thousand places where intoxicating liquor was sold in the township with a population, including the out-townships, of about 200,000.³ He quoted Mr. Braidley, the Borough Reeve

¹ Quoted by Faucher.

² See below, p. 221.

³ In 1905 the proportion was about the same, one to 213 of the population. To-day it is one to 421.

in 1831, who was a keen Sunday-school worker, and who counted the people going into a gin shop in five minutes on eight consecutive Saturday evenings—a total of 275 men and women in fifty minutes. Twenty years earlier "drunkenness had been considered a degrading indulgence; the dram shops were in retired places, and their customers entered secretly by private doors; and a candle placed behind the window was the dubious sign to arrest the attention of the passer-by."¹ But now "the decency of our town is violated, even in this respect, that every street blazens forth the invitations of these haunts of crime. Gin shops and beer houses . . . and taverns, over which the police can at present exercise but imperfect control, have multiplied."²

There was then no limitation of hours. The public-houses opened at 5 or 6 a.m. so that they could be visited on the way to work, and they were also open all day on Sundays.³ Saturday nights and Sundays were the chief drinking times and much irregularity of work on Monday morning was the result.

"When Saturday evening came, indulgence began which continued till Sunday evening. Fiddlers were to be heard on all sides and limp-looking men and pale-faced women thronged the public-houses, and reeled and jigged until they were turned into the streets. On the Sunday morning, the public-houses were again thronged, that the thirst following the indulgence of the night before might be quenched. When church hour approached, the churchwardens, with long staves tipped with silver, sallied forth and seized all the drunken and unkempt on whom they could lay their hands; and these being carefully lodged in a pew provided for them, were left to enjoy the sermon. Their captors then adjourned to some tavern near at hand, and rewarded themselves with a glass or two for the important services they had rendered to morality and religion. In fact, sullen, silent work alternated with noisy drunken riot."⁴

There were no places of public recreation, no parks, and although,

¹ Faucher, p. 48.

² *Four Periods of Public Education*, by Kay-Shuttleworth, p. 33.

³ By Sec. 202 of the Manchester Police Act of 1844, public-houses did not open before 6 a.m., and were closed between ten and twelve o'clock midday. Spirits also were not supplied to children under sixteen. (Sec. 204.)

⁴ *A Comparison of Some of the Economic and Social Conditions of Manchester in 1834 and 1884*, by Robert Montgomery, 1884, pp. 27-28.

as we know from the opening pages of Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, there were still country lanes in Greenheys, that was some way from the centre of the town. The Botanic Gardens on the Altrincham Road, with their military band, were closed on Sundays, but in any case a charge was made to go there, as also to the Zoological Gardens—the forerunner of Belle Vue, on another site. Even the cemeteries were closed on Sundays. The better educated and politically-minded worker had two resorts on Sunday: the Carpenters' Hall, which belonged to the Chartists and where they held meetings in support of the Charter and sang "democratic hymns," and the "Hall of Science" at Campfield, later to be the home of the Free Library. This hall had been built by the followers of Robert Owen, and was the largest lecture-hall in the town. Lectures on Socialism and a Sunday school were combined with "cheap and innocent recreation." The committee forbade intoxicating liquor at any of their gatherings, and were said to be among the first to popularize tea-parties as a means of recreation. The fact that they raised all the money they needed themselves shows that this group of Socialists belonged to the better-paid section of the workers.

The appalling sanitary conditions, underfeeding, the long hours of work and the consequent excessive drinking, which only the strongest minded of the workers could resist, resulted in a high death rate. Half the children died under the age of five, and Manchester was notorious for its high general death rate. It is no wonder that unrest which took the form of strikes, or bread riots, or attacks on mills and machinery, was recurrent, and it is hardly surprising that in such an atmosphere big demonstrations in favour of the Charter such as that at Kersal Moor in 1839, should have made the authorities nervous. They were always conscious of the "labouring population which lies like a slumbering giant at their feet."¹

Manchester, to a southerner, seemed a wild and barbarous place where civilization was almost unknown and where immense machines, belching forth black smoke, were worked by a population only restrained from revolution by the military. "Well, Doctor," was King William IV's greeting to Dr. Dalton, the distinguished Manchester scientist, "are you all quiet at Manchester?"² This

¹ *Four Periods of Public Education*, by Kay-Shuttleworth, p. 49.

² *History of the Cotton Famine*, by A. Arnold, p. 52.

exaggerated view was partly due to the memory of Peterloo when the governing classes in London accepted the panic view taken of that demonstration by the Manchester magistrates.

In politics the town was Liberal, or Whig, as that party was then called. The first two members of Parliament in 1832 were Mark Philips, whose name will always be associated with the first parks that came to the city, and Poulet Thomson, and they were both still members in 1838. There was no Conservative member until 1868, when Hugh Birley was elected to share the representation of the city with Jacob Bright, Liberal. There was no daily newspaper, the *Manchester Guardian*—Liberal, the *Manchester Times*—Radical, and the *Manchester Chronicle*—Conservative, came out twice a week, Wednesdays and Saturdays, and their price was 4d.

Thomas Potter and his brother Richard, who became M.P. for Wigan and had left Manchester by 1838, were leading members of the Liberal organization. Not only most of the leading business men, but the majority of the population, were dissenters—if we may judge by the fact that less than 31 per cent of the Sunday-school scholars attended Church of England Sunday schools. The Unitarians, whose chapel at Cross Street had Mrs. Gaskell's husband as its junior minister at this time,¹ was the most influential sect to which belonged the Potters, Alexander Kay, Abel Heywood, John Shuttleworth, all of whom became members of the Town Council, and all but one, Mayor. Another, Sir Benjamin Heywood, M.P. for the county, the banker—whose son Oliver was made the first freeman of the city in 1888 in recognition of his public work, and whose statue stands in Albert Square—was the first president of the Statistical Society and also president of the Mechanics' Institute.

The most important of the Conservative families was the Birleys who owned large cotton mills in Chorlton-on-Medlock just behind Oxford Street, but Hugh Hornby Birley, their leading member, took no part in the political squabble that developed—as we shall see—over the fight for the municipal charter, but was prominent in social and church work. The leading churchman at that time was Canon Wray, who had been largely responsible for the Government grant given to help to build churches in the rapidly developing industrial centres.

¹ He had married in 1832, and they lived in Dover Street in 1838.

James Crossley, the choleric solicitor, who combined strong political party feeling with a love of books, and who was president of the Chetham Society, was a prominent Conservative. He was a member of John Shaw's Club, which formed the inner circle of the Conservative party. Though seldom taking office themselves, the members were said to be able to arrange for the election of their candidates as Borough Reeve and Constables, Churchwardens and Overseers, and Highway Surveyors.

The "owd Church," as the Parish Church was called, formed the centre of that part of the government which was in the hands of these functionaries. The Quaker, William Neild, was only chosen as Constable and then as Borough Reeve¹ in 1837 because the available supply of churchmen with the necessary qualifications had come to an end. The Police Commissioners,² who were an elected body, had Liberals like Thomas Potter, William Neild, Archibald Prentice, the writer, John Edward Taylor, the proprietor and editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, and Abel Heywood amongst them. The last-named, who became twice Mayor of Manchester and Freeman of the city and who died in 1891, was the founder of the flourishing business of Heywood and Son. He was a bookseller who went to prison in 1836 for selling unstamped the *Poor Man's Guardian* at a time when a stamp duty of 4d. was charged on all papers. This tax on knowledge was reduced to 1d. in 1836³ because of the agitation against it, in which Abel Heywood played a large part.

There were Police Commissioners who were still more "to the left," as we should say to-day. James Wroe, also a bookseller in Great Ancoats Street, collaborated with the Tory opposition to the municipal charter because it was a Whig measure. His sympathies were with the Chartists, who were agitating for adult suffrage, vote by ballot, and annual parliaments, and who felt that the Whigs, in their Reform Act of 1832 with the £10 franchise, had let them down. Another Radical of this description was Elijah Dixon of Newton Heath who, with Sam Bamford, had been imprisoned after Peterloo. Dr. Scholefield, the doctor-preacher of Every Street, was also a sympathizer with the Chartists, although a strong opponent of unconstitutional methods. He built the Round Chapel,

¹ See below, p. 75.

² It was not abolished until 1855.

³ See post, p. 51.

now used by the University Settlement, and had great influence with the Ancoats people.

There was no leisured class in Manchester, and the employers worked almost as long hours as their workers. Overworking seemed to the French visitor "the malady which Lancashire has inflicted upon England, and which England in its turn has inflicted upon Europe. Manchester is the seat, the concentrated focus of this malady."¹ Another observer expressed this only a little less forcibly when he said, "It is essentially a place of business, where pleasure is unknown as a pursuit and amusements scarcely rank as secondary considerations. Every person who passes you in the street has the look of thought and the step of haste. . . . A modern author has stated the theory that, as certain insects assume the colours and marks of the leaves on which they feed, so the citizens of certain towns offer whimsical analogies to the character of the place in which they dwell. This is, to a considerable extent, true of Manchester. The men are as business-like as the place. . . . There is a kind of vague tradition, or rather remote recollection, that a man was once seen to gossip on the Exchange; it was mentioned in the terms one would use if he saw a saraband danced in St. Peter's or Harlequin played his antics at the Old Bailey. For my own part, I felt my loquacious tendencies so chilled by the genius of the place, that I deemed myself qualified to become a candidate for La Trappe."²

There was, however, one holiday in the year—Whitsuntide—when the races and the Sunday-school processions took place and the exhausted worker had the chance of a rest. In *Mary Barton* we get a glimpse of factory workers going by canal boat to Dunham for the day. Before cheap railway trains or 'buses, with fares which made them available to the workers, travel by canal was the best and cheapest way of getting into the country.

In spite of its rapid expansion the cotton industry underwent many vicissitudes. Bankruptcies were common and hard work essential. Thomas Potter, whose father was a yeoman farmer at Tadcaster, William Neild, who came as a country lad to the firm of which he became partner, Elkanah Armitage, who started with

¹ Faucher, p. 81.

² *Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing District of Lancashire*, by W. Cooke Taylor, 1841.

a small draper's shop—and, in fact, practically all the merchants and manufacturers—were men who only rose to positions of wealth and importance through hard work. They usually took a long dinner hour, two hours, but they stayed at their warehouses until late. In spite of hard work and anxious years many of these men found time for other things. Some of them, like Thomas Potter, William Neild, and Paul Willert, were elected Police Commissioners, some were Churchwardens and Overseers, some were County Justices. Many of them were members of the Portico Library in Mosley Street, founded in 1806, which provided daily papers, reading-rooms and a library of varied volumes. The Literary and Philosophical Society had been founded in 1781, and in 1838 had John Dalton as its president and Joule as a member. Many of the medical men belonged to this society. A group of Manchester business men and bankers, William Langton, Benjamin Heywood, the Gregs of Styal, started the Statistical Society in 1833¹ in order to have actual knowledge of conditions in their town. Dr. Kay was a member and one of the first inquiries was into the conditions of the working classes in Manchester, the second was the famous inquiry into education in the town.² These men were also concerned with education. William Neild was on the committee of the Lancasterian School; Benjamin Heywood was president of the Mechanics' Institute. The Athenaeum, a club for young business men which still carries out the intentions of the men who founded it a hundred years ago, had many of them on its board of directors. The money for the building—designed by Sir Charles Barry—was subscribed by the leading business men, amongst whom were Thomas Potter, Richard Cobden, and Absalom Watkin. "Soirees" were a popular form of entertainment, at which some distinguished visitor—Charles Dickens came there in 1843—would give an address followed by a social gathering or a dance³ in which the directors and their wives joined with the members.

The black picture of industrialism a hundred years ago is relieved

¹ The Royal Statistical Society in London was started the following year.

² See below, p. 216.

³ Referring to one of these occasions in 1839, Absalom Watkin wrote in his diary, "It was a pleasant scene, but I dislike the waltz more than ever. It is ugly and indecent." Absalom Watkin, *Extracts from his Journal*. Ed. by A. E. Watkin, p. 205.

to a certain extent by the fact that some of the men who were making money out of it felt some responsibility for its evils. The cynical view that the concern of the middle class for the conditions of life of the working class was merely a form of insurance against revolution is too simple to be completely true.

If the well-off middle classes had money and large houses and gardens, they had few of the conveniences that to-day we should consider essential. Their houses were lit by candles, as gas was too expensive for use in private houses; they had no baths and no water carriage. Cesspools in the gardens, which had to be cleaned out at intervals, were better than the privy middens in the working-class houses, but very inferior to water-closets. Their water supply might be, and often was, polluted and thus a source of typhoid and other diseases.

The men rode or drove to their warehouses and offices, and the ladies drove in "sociables" to St. Anns Street, then as now the fashionable shopping centre. People went to London by mail coach before the advent of the railways. In 1830 the first passenger railway in England was opened, from Manchester to Liverpool, with the Manchester terminus in Liverpool Road. In those days passengers booked their seats in the particular compartments in which they were to travel, names and addresses being taken so that in the event of an accident it might be known at once who had been killed. If they were going for a long stay and wished to take their carriage with them, they had it strapped to a truck and then took the journey seated inside. Passengers' luggage was piled on the roofs of the carriages and sometimes it was knocked off under bridges or in tunnels. Very poor accommodation was provided for third class and the fourth might mean standing room only, in an open truck.

The description of the appearance of Manchester given in a guide-book a hundred years ago is still accurate enough for to-day: "The town is often covered, especially during the winter, with dense fogs, and there is at all times a very copious descent of soot and other impurities. But the general temperature of the air is mild; and seed time and harvest are as early in this neighbourhood, as in any part of the adjoining counties.

"The appearance of the town must be left to speak for itself. To strangers it is not generally prepossessing, the central and the

principal parts of the town being almost choked up with warehouses; still it will be seen there are some good streets and handsome buildings, and the villas and cottages in the outskirts are not, for the taste and neatness displayed in them, to be exceeded in any part of the kingdom."¹

But when we come to compare in detail the town we know with that of the past, we realize that the difference amounts to little less than a revolution in sanitation, health, education, amenities of life, in fact in everything that goes to make for civilization.

Apart from the material improvements, perhaps what would most strike a Manchester man of 1838 would be the lack of that class distinction between the working class and the employing class. Then the workers dressed in "fustian" and gentlemen in broad-cloth—to-day it is impossible to distinguish the classes by their clothes. Then, the only places of entertainment and recreation for the workers were the gin palaces and public-houses, to which "gentlemen" did not go. To-day all classes go to the pictures, and even if the cheaper houses are in the poorer districts of the town, the same pictures are shown in both. To-day, too, all classes have their wireless and the choice of topics to which to listen is certainly not settled by social class or by money income. All classes use the parks and meet in the City Council and on the Bench, and if all classes do not yet mix in the elementary school, they do in the secondary schools and in the University.

The French writer De Tocqueville said of Manchester in 1835: "Everything in the outer appearance of the city attests the individual power of man; nothing the regulating power of society. Human liberty reveals at each step its capricious and creative force. Nowhere is apparent the slow and continuous action of government."

In the following pages we attempt to show how "the slow and continuous action of government" gradually brought about the evolution of the city of 1938 from what another foreigner called "the monstrous agglomeration" of 1838.

¹ *Panorama of Manchester and Railway Companion*, 1834, p. 44.

CHAPTER II

HOW MANCHESTER WAS GOVERNED IN 1838

THE Manchester man of 1838 would have found some difficulty in defining and explaining the various jurisdictions under which he came, and the functions and methods of appointment of the various authorities which touched his affairs as a citizen. The local government of Manchester before the incorporation of 1838, and, indeed, for many years afterwards, was a curious medley. It was partly manorial, partly parochial, partly the creation of recent Acts of Parliament; in part it was democratic, in part oligarchic and aristocratic. It was also extremely confused. The residents of Market Street and Mosley Street lived under different local governing authorities from the residents of Grosvenor Square or Ardwick Green. In this chapter we must concentrate on the township of Manchester, because it was the largest and most important, with only an occasional glance at the out-townships of Chorlton-on-Medlock—or Chorlton Row as it was often called—Ardwick, Hulme, Cheetham, and Beswick, which were united with it to form the Municipal Borough in 1838.

There were five different bodies which exercised jurisdiction over the inhabitants of the township of Manchester a hundred years ago.

- (1) The Court Leet of the Lord of the Manor, Sir Oswald Mosley, with its Borough Reeve, Constables, and numerous nominal officers, was the survival of the manorial government of very early times.
- (2) The Churchwardens and Overseers—the officers of the old parochial system, which for centuries had combined care of Church and poor, and responsibility for assessing and collecting the Poor Rate.
- (3) The Police and Improvement Commissioners—a new body called into being by the great urban growth of the Industrial Revolution.
- (4) The Surveyors of Highways—old parish officers.

(5) The Justices of the Peace for the county, representing the old aristocratic supervision of local affairs by the King's officers.

COURT LEET, BOROUGH REEVE, AND CONSTABLES

Manchester, by some mediaeval accident, did not, like Liverpool or Stockport, or even Altrincham, become a corporation with a mayor. It retained, in 1838, the same rudimentary organ of the manorial Court Leet, with its jury and unpaid officers, which it had in the sixteenth century. The Lord of the Manor was Sir Oswald Mosley, a Manchester man, descendant of the Sir Nicholas Mosley who became Lord Mayor of London, and who had bought the manorial rights in 1596 for £3,500. The Mosleys had long ceased to live much in Manchester; their home was at Rolleston Hall in Staffordshire, and their interest in Manchester was confined mainly to their revenues from the market rights and tolls.

The Court Leet, the Lord of the Manor's Court, had two sides. In the first place it sat as a small-debts court every three weeks and administered expensive justice to the poor. In the second place, there were two annual "great court leets," in autumn and spring, at which, presided over by the Lord's Steward, a jury of the most influential inhabitants was assembled, the manorial officers were appointed and a few cases of market offences and "common nuisances" were dealt with. The main importance of the Court Leet in the 'thirties was that it chose the Borough Reeve and the two Constables. These were honorary offices, and were filled by prominent citizens, but they had to be citizens who actually lived within the boundaries of the township. These three officers were the most influential in the town. The Borough Reeve, elected for one year only, and rarely serving twice, had the status we now associate with that of the Lord Mayor. He ranked as chief citizen, presided at the town's meetings, represented the town on ceremonial occasions, and administered the charities now included under the Lord Mayor's Charities. He was *ex officio* a member, and in practice chairman, of the Police and Improvement Commis-

sioners, and was chairman of special *ad hoc* bodies, like the Special Board of Health set up during the cholera epidemic of 1831-33.¹

We can see something of the life of such a citizen in the diary of Benjamin Braideley,² whose period of office in 1831-32 covered the first cholera epidemic and the passing of the Reform Act. We see him passing through the chain of public offices—Sidesman, Churchwarden, and Constable—to the highest post of Borough Reeve. He was conscientious in his duties, and his day's work, with its eating of ceremonial lunches and dinners, its attendance at innumerable committees and functions, was not unlike that of a modern Lord Mayor. Of the method by which the Borough Reeve was chosen we shall see something later.

The two Constables, also serving for a year only, were responsible for the day police force. This consisted of thirty men under the Deputy Constable, a salaried officer. In troubled times this force was frequently supplemented by special constables. The Constables, like the Borough Reeve, were only elected for a year and then not by the ratepayers whose money they spent, but by the Court Leet jury. As this also changed each year there was no body to whom they were responsible. Their expenses were paid out of the Poor Rate. They did not submit any estimates, and if the quarterly meetings of ratepayers refused to pass their accounts, they could appeal to the Justices, who, after hearing both sides, could order the Overseers to pay them. The Churchwardens and Overseers who raised the Poor Rate and who were supposed to be responsible for its expenditure, had no control over the Constables.

When night police became necessary, a new body, the Police and Improvement Commissioners, was set up under a special Act of Parliament of 1792.³ Although the Constables were made *ex officio* members of this body, the day and night police were kept quite separate—each under its own salaried chiefs.

In addition to the Borough Reeve and Constables, there was a long list of officers also appointed by the Court Leet jury. They were Mise Layers, Mise Gatherers—the men who used to assess and collect any tax or rate imposed by the King and Justices of the

¹ See above, p. 23.

² *Memoir of Benjamin Braideley*, 1845.

³ The earlier Act of 1765 for cleansing and lighting had given no powers for a "nightly watch."

Peace—Market Lookers for Fish and Flesh, Inspectors of White Meat, Officers to prevent Engrossing, Regrating and Forestalling, Inspectors of Weights and Measures, Market Looker for the Assize of Bread, Officers for Tasting wholesome Ale and Beer, Byelaw men, Officers for Muzzling Mastiff Dogs, and a Pounder. As these names suggest the offices were very ancient, but they were all still filled in 1838. There was no salary attached to them and the people appointed by the jury had to accept these offices as well as the high ones of Reeve and Constables on penalty of a fine. This system was a survival of the old system of local government when salaried officials were unknown and every resident was responsible in turn for the work of keeping watch and ward, repairing the roads and enforcing those rules and regulations which are necessary in every community.

The October meeting of the Court Leet in 1837 led to its extinction, for it was at that meeting that Richard Cobden, summoned as juror, and William Neild, elected Borough Reeve against his will, joined forces in the movement for municipal reform which resulted in the incorporation of the town.

On October 19, 1837, the Court Leet jury, summoned by the Deputy Steward of the Lord of the Manor, and consisting of leading business men, met at the Manor Court Room in Brown Street. The business began with the following curiously worded resolution which was passed by the jury at every meeting, and which dates from the beginning of the Court Leet when every burgess was supposed to appear to do suit and service to the Lord of the Manor. "The Jurors aforesaid being duly sworn do amerce all and every the Burgesses who owe suit and service to this Court and who have not appeared or essoigned here this day in sixpence each and all and every other inhabitant who have defaulted in like manner of threepence each." By 1838, and indeed long before, this resolution had become as obsolete as some of the offices that were filled by the jury, for it would have been impossible to collect the fines from the 180,000 inhabitants of Manchester.

In his pamphlet *Incorporate Your Borough*,¹ Cobden has given a vivid account of this meeting: "Now, how will my readers, who are not in the secret, be surprised when they are told of the manner in which these important functionaries are appointed to the govern-

¹ Cobden as a Citizen, ed. by W. E. A. Axon, p. 30.

ment of the second town in the British Empire! It cannot be better explained than by describing the proceedings at the last Court Leet of the Lord of the Manor, when it was my amusing fate to be summoned as one of the jurors.

"And first for the locality, where the august ceremony of the election of the highest municipal officers for the town of Manchester takes place.

"At the appointed hour, ascending by a flight of steps in Brown Street, leading up to several other apartments, and to a dancing master's academy amongst the rest, I reached the door of the Manor Court room, which is large, and altogether destitute of furniture, whose row of tall old-fashioned windows would, but for the crust of smoke and dirt that covered them, have afforded a cheerful light. The atmosphere of the room was heavy and stale; it had probably been confined ever since the last public meeting of the teetotalers was held there, a month before. To the left of the door lay a heap of sawdust, provided, perhaps (but this is only conjecture), against a meeting of operative Conservatives, when it would be judiciously strewed on the floor to hide the dirt which those worthies are accustomed to carry about them. A filthy white dog, with black spots, had curled himself upon this tempting bed; and he lifted up his ears with excusable surprise at the shrill tones of the crier, who now opened the court with the usual 'O Yes,' followed by an unintelligible jargon of Saxon, Old English and Norman epithets. The jurors were now penned within a small enclosure at the furthest extremity of the room; the representative of the Lord of the Manor took his seat in a small spring desk springing from the wall; his legal agent sat below; the oaths were administered to the jurymen; the assessor, having in about three minutes and a half delivered his charge, adjourned the court till the afternoon. Whilst these preliminaries were going on I looked over the enclosure which, I supposed, was designated to separate the crowd of spectators from the jurors, and I counted, besides the police constables, exactly *seven individuals* and they, one by one, walked listlessly away, leaving the jurors only in the deserted and murky chamber; and we now proceeded to make choice of three persons to fill the offices of boroughreeve and constables of Manchester—a task in which we were greatly quickened by the piercing cold vapour with which the apartment was filled. Having dispatched

messengers to the individuals nominated, summoning them to appear in the afternoon, to be sworn into office, we separated. At the appointed hour the court and jurors again assembled, when the gentleman who had been nominated to the office of boroughreeve attended and claimed to be exempted on the grounds of ill-health and previous service. The jurors protested that there was not another person remaining in the township liable, and at the same time eligible, to fill this high office. Some little difference of opinion existing, however, we requested permission to retire, and were conducted through a room into a closet under the stairs, in which were deposited the bonnets, shawls, cloaks and clogs of the nymphs who were threading the mazes of the quadrille and waltz in the dancing academy above. Here some stood, while others sat, and the remainder stooped beneath the stairs, till our deliberations, which were not a little accelerated by our incommodeous quarters, were brought to a close, and we returned into court with a verdict against the claims to exemption put in by the boroughreeve elect, who thereupon was declared contumacious, and fined £200 (which fine was afterwards remitted). Our choice next fell upon an individual absent from Manchester, and the court adjourned for two days that he might have time to appear. On reassembling at the appointed time he presented himself to protest against nomination; but he yielded reluctantly, and the honour was at last gently forced upon him. The two individuals chosen constables were also unwillingly compelled to take the oaths of office. The crier soon afterwards formerly adjourned the court to the Mosley Arms Hotel for dinner, at which all present laughed heartily; and thus terminated the *farce of a mock election of officers to govern the affairs of the town of Manchester.*

"Neither the boroughreeve nor the constables whom I joined in electing were known to me, privately or publicly. I had not the least knowledge of them, personally or by repute; and the other jurors were alike in the dark upon the subject of their qualifications. The jury summoned to appoint those officers are selected by the legal agent of the Lord of the Manor; they attend unwillingly; the boroughreeve submits to his appointment unwillingly; the public is indifferent to the whole proceedings, not one in ten thousand of the population of Manchester attending to witness it; probably no one person in fifty of the inhabitants knows even the

names of the boroughtreeve and constables at the moment; and not one individual in two hundred is acquainted with them personally."

After the discussions about this office, the jury then nominated the Deputy Constable at a yearly salary of £400, and he was appointed. Four beadles were then appointed in the same way and sworn in. These, with the police appointed by the Deputy Constable, were the only salaried officers of the Court.

After this business the jury occupied itself with "presentments." People who had committed certain offences described as "common nuisances" were summoned and fined. Three butchers were presented for exposing for sale diseased and unwholesome meat, a fruiterer and a grocer for using faked weights, five mill owners for permitting smoky chimneys, a manufacturer for allowing noxious, fetid and unwholesome vapours from boiling hams and a poultreer for keeping fowls in a cellar from which unwholesome stenches arose. These offences had been committed during the preceding six months, that is, since the last meeting of the Court in April. Fines were imposed varying from 1s. to £100, the latter being inflicted upon manufacturers for causing an excessive amount of smoke from their chimneys. The jury then appointed five of its members as "affearers," that is, people to consider whether the fines were just and should be imposed, and the Court adjourned for two days until October 21st, when it met again, the "affearers" affirmed the several assessments or fines, and then the list was printed.

Even after the grant of a special Court of Petty Sessions for the Borough of Manchester in 1839, the Court Leet kept its jurisdiction, and apart from indictment at Quarter Sessions, an expensive and uncertain procedure, the only remedy for certain offences was by the old clumsy method of "presentment." Inspectors of Nuisances under the newly-formed Corporation had to proceed in this way until the town purchased from Sir Oswald Mosley the market and manorial rights in 1846. The Manchester Police Act of 1844 had embodied in its sections those offences that, from time immemorial, had been considered common nuisances by the Court Leet, but the police courts could not deal with them until the extinction of the Court Leet in 1846.

It is not difficult to understand the feelings expressed by Richard Cobden and William Neild and shared by many of the citizens who had served on the jury, that this survival of a mediaeval form of government, suitable for a small community where the members lived in close touch with one another, was completely unsuited to modern conditions. The Lord of the Manor had lost the power of raising a single shilling to enable the Court Leet officers to discharge their duties. The requisite funds for the day police were supplied by the Churchwardens from the Poor Rate. "Thus the party that makes the appointment can grant no funds, the party which supplies the funds has no power over the appointment."¹ The Borough Reeve and Constables were, partly by custom and partly by the requirements of local Acts, made chairmen of the chief committees of the Commissioners of the Police, yet the Commissioners had no more control over these appointments than the leypayers.² Above all, these offices which should have been, like the present Lord Mayoralty, worthy objects of civic ambition, had come to be considered by many of the dwindling number of people who were qualified for them by residence and custom, with "utter aversion." It was an unwritten law that no shopkeeper should be chosen, and the successful business men were every year moving further away from the centre of Manchester to live in the suburbs. As we saw in the last chapter, Mosley Street, which at the beginning of the century was still the fashionable quarter of the town, was becoming increasingly occupied by warehouses and offices and the custom of living on business premises was going out of fashion.

It is surprising that Manchester, the largest provincial town in England and the centre of the rapidly developing industrial area of south-east Lancashire, should for so long have tolerated such an antiquated form of town government. As we shall see in the next chapter, William Neild had made an attempt at reform a few years before his happy meeting with Cobden in the stuffy Manor Court room in Brown Street in 1837. The combination of these men brought into being the Municipal Council.³

¹ Letter by William Neild to the *Manchester Guardian*, January 7, 1837.

² Ratepayers.

³ It is difficult to be sure if Manchester or Liverpool was the largest municipality in 1838. The population of Manchester returned to the Privy Council by Captain Jebb was 242,357.

THE CHURCHWARDENS AND OVERSEERS

The Churchwardens and Overseers, like the Surveyors of Highways which we will describe later, were parish officers elected by the inhabitants at large. A hundred years ago the parish was the most important unit of government. Manorial boroughs and ancient corporations were found in different parts of the country, but the parish was universal. Since Elizabeth's day it had been the basis of our rating system, for when the growing problem of the destitute had been accentuated by the break up of the monasteries which had previously looked after the poor, compulsory rating for this purpose was introduced. Four Overseers appointed by the Justices¹ were to act with the Churchwardens in raising and spending the Poor Rate. Even the Constable² appointed by the Court Leet had his expenses paid from the Poor Rate. The open Parish Vestry was for several centuries unique in England as the only popular assembly—other than the House of Commons—having the right to impose compulsory taxation.³

The parish of Manchester was very large, covering about sixty square miles. It stretched from Ashton-under-Lyne in the east to Eccles in the west, from Middleton in the north to Didsbury in the south. It included thirty townships, and its population at the census of 1831 was over 279,000. For many years before 1838 the townships had held their public meetings of leypayers to nominate their Constables, Overseers and Highway Surveyors, and to levy their Poor Rate and Highway Rate, but the Churchwardens⁴ of the Collegiate Church continued to act in ecclesiastical matters for the whole parish and they, with the Churchwardens and Sidesmen for the six divisions⁵ of the vast parish, were elected at the Easter Vestry.

It was the duty of the Justices to appoint Overseers and there was no legal necessity for previous election by the Vestry meeting,

¹ 39 Eliz., c. 3.

² See above, p. 40.

³ *The Parish and the County*, by S. and B. Webb, p. 48.

⁴ Inhabitants of the undivided parish were eligible to vote for the election of Churchwardens.

⁵ These were Manchester, Salford, Blackley, Newton, Withington, and Stretford.

but it had been customary, not only in Manchester but throughout the whole of the country, to send to the Magistrates for appointment to this office a list of people who had been elected with the Churchwardens at the Easter Vestry. These in Manchester were called Sidesmen, or Assistants to the Churchwardens.

From "a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary" the Parish Church had been the place at which the meetings of leypayers had been held, but in 1838 we find that some of them were held in the Town Hall.¹

The annual Vestry meeting held at Easter to elect Churchwardens and Sidesmen was held in the Parish and Collegiate Church; so was the annual meeting to elect both Parish and Township Surveyors of Highways. But the quarterly meetings, summoned by the Churchwardens and Overseers to pass the Constables' accounts, were held in the Town Hall, and the annual meeting to pass the Overseers' accounts was also held there.²

This intermingling of civil and ecclesiastical functions in the persons of Churchwardens and Overseers was evidently as confusing to the ratepayers of that day as it is to us. For instance, at the Vestry meeting in 1838 to elect Churchwardens and Sidesmen, a ratepayer wished to raise a question with regard to the salaries of officials and clerks at the Overseers' office in Fountain Street. The chairman refused to allow it as he said that it was not relevant to the object of the meeting, which was parish business. Another ratepayer raised a question connected with the valuation for Poor Rate, and he was also told that he could not discuss it there, but that he could properly raise it at the quarterly meeting for passing the Constables' accounts to be held a day or so later. The fact that the Constables had nothing to do with assessment and no connection with the staff at Fountain Street was not, apparently, any bar to the discussion at their meeting of Overseers' business. When their accounts had been passed and the salary of the Deputy-Constable discussed, questions relating to expenses of valuation, the dismissal of a Poor Rate collector and the making of the list of Parliamentary electors were all raised and debated. The quarterly meeting for the Constables' accounts had, therefore, in the absence

¹ See below, p. 53.

² The annual meeting to levy the Church Rate, which until 1833 had been compulsory in Manchester, was always held in the Parish Church.

of any other machinery for popular control of the Overseers, come to be used for that purpose.

The dual character of Churchwardens and Sidesmen as ecclesiastical and civil officers appeared also in connection with the Church Rate. Until 1833 this had been collected with the Poor Rate, although levied at a separate meeting.

When they were dealing with Church affairs and with the spending of the Church Rate, the Churchwardens and Sidesmen met at the Parish Church and entered their names in the minute book under the column "Churchwardens and Sidesmen." When they dealt with civil matters they met at the Fountain Street office¹ and entered their names as Churchwardens and Overseers. But even when in 1838 the Church Rate had become voluntary, and no accounts were therefore presented publicly, they seem to have had no hesitation in still using the same machinery as for the collection of the Poor Rate.

The fact that some of the public meetings were held in the Parish Church was no guarantee that they would be more orderly than those held in the Town Hall. Usually the Vestry meetings were not attended by many people, but in the stormy years of the eighteen-thirties the popular leaders, Thomas and Richard Potter, John Edward Taylor, Archibald Prentice and Richard Cobden, fought hard to get their own nominees elected as Churchwardens and Highway Surveyors, and to prevent the imposition of a Church Rate.²

In 1838, however, the meeting which was held on April 17th was only attended by a few "respectable inhabitants" who elected the Churchwardens and Sidesmen. These were by custom nominated by the outgoing set, so that the management of affairs was kept in the hands of a little clique. The County Justices acting for the Division of Manchester then formally appointed the Sidesmen as Overseers. All these officers, like the Borough Reeve and Constables, were only elected for one year, and it was unusual for a man to serve twice.

The civil work of the Churchwardens and Overseers was threefold. They were responsible for assessing and collecting the Poor Rate, which was also used for the Constables' expenses and

¹ Before 1820 they had met at the Workhouse.

² See *The Parish and the County* by S. and B. Webb, pp. 99, 100.

for such extra expenditure as that in 1831 and 1832 when cholera visited the town; they made up the lists of parliamentary and, later, of municipal voters, and they were also responsible for caring for the poor within and without the workhouse.

These duties were common to Churchwardens and Overseers throughout the country, but the manner in which they were executed differed. The system in Manchester was settled by a local Act of 1790,¹ under which the new workhouse—situated where Victoria Station now stands—was built. The Churchwardens and Overseers managed the workhouse, appointed and paid the Master, Matron, Chaplain and any other officials that they wished to employ. They were also free to administer out-relief, subject only to the right of the Justices to order out-relief in any case in which it had been refused, and where an appeal had been made to them.

By the local Act the Churchwardens and Overseers could apply to the Justices for additional Overseers, whom the Justices then appointed on their recommendation. The Justices also had to sanction the payment of salary to any of the Overseers. As a matter of fact, this power of the Justices had become nominal by 1838, and the Board of Churchwardens and Overseers settled the names of the additional Overseers and the salaries to be paid to the staff, and the Justices passed them without question. But when the fight against the new Town Council was carried on by the Churchwardens, the Justices, as we shall see, were confronted with two rival lists of Overseers. The same term "Overseer" covered both the voluntary part-time administrators and the salaried full-time officials. The people that we now call "Relieving Officers" were then called "Visiting Overseers."

The Board met once a month, but there were weekly meetings of the four district Boards for out-relief presided over by two members. At these meetings the Comptroller presented a report of the number of cases and amount of relief given during the preceding week and "anything which he may consider deserving their notice."

The office in Fountain Street was opened at eight o'clock in the morning, when all the Visiting Overseers, or Relieving Officers, had to be in attendance to answer applications for relief. They then went out to visit, and in the evening returned to the office to report

¹ 30 Geo. III, c. 81.

their visits and to attend to any applications that had come in during the day. It was the duty of the Comptroller to receive these reports and "to see that the business of the day is completed and especially that the poor people are dismissed to their homes in due time," and also "that at 12 o'clock or when the day's work is finished, the offices are securely closed." There were no definite office hours in those days, and eight o'clock in the morning to twelve o'clock at night sounds somewhat long.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 substituted Guardians elected from a union of parishes or townships and strictly controlled by the central government, for the Churchwardens and Overseers in all matters concerning the relief of the poor. There was, however, so much opposition in the industrial areas to the new system that it was not introduced in Manchester until 1841.¹ The old system was therefore still in force in the township of 1838.

The election of Churchwardens, like so many events in those days, was the occasion for a dinner, but they also had quarterly veal pie dinners, the cost of which was met by the fines imposed on those who were absent from committee meetings without cause or who arrived late! On the occasion of the annual sermon at the Collegiate Church for the Sunday schools, the Borough Reeve, Constables and Churchwardens dined with the preacher and the other clergymen at the Warden's house.

As we have seen in the first chapter, Nonconformists were strong in Manchester. Although some served as Police Commissioners, they were naturally excluded from the offices of Churchwardens and, owing to the custom of appointing Sidesmen as Overseers, from that of Overseers also. It was also rare that a Dissenter like William Neild, a Quaker, was appointed to the office of Constable or Borough Reeve. It is easy to realize, therefore, how a close governing body was formed of the Manorial officers and the Churchwardens and Overseers, who between them exercised so much control over the lives of the ordinary people.

The separation of civil government from ecclesiastical control took a long time. When the controversy over the charter ended in 1842, Sidesmen ceased to be appointed Overseers. The Board thereafter consisted of Churchwardens and Overseers nominated by the Board and appointed by the Justices under section 44 of

¹ See below, p. 318.

the 1790 Act. In 1850¹ the question having been raised, counsel advised that the Churchwardens had no right to be associated with the Overseers in rating matters. Since the Act of 1662,² the authority for all matters affecting the poor in large parishes in the north of England was given to the Overseers of the townships, and the Churchwardens had only long custom and no legal right to which to appeal. By the local Act of 1790 for erection of the workhouse, they had been associated with the Overseers in Manchester in the care of the poor, but, as the workhouse had been paid for and as the Guardians had taken over the care of the poor since 1841, there was no longer any reason why they should take part in civil affairs. From 1850, therefore, the election of Churchwardens became merely a matter of ecclesiastical concern, and the inextricable mingling of religious and civil government that had existed as far back as history relates, came to an end.³

III

POLICE AND IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS

In their volume *Statutory Authorities*, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb describe the growth all over the country of various bodies of Improvement Commissioners during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As the population increased, as industry developed and drew large numbers of people into new urban centres, the need arose for some body with authority to control these communities in the interests of safety, convenience and health. Even in those towns which had possessed corporations from ancient times this need was felt, for as the Report of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations showed,⁴ most of the old governing bodies had become close and corrupt and their limited powers were unable to deal with the problems of a modern town. So we find public-spirited citizens everywhere forming themselves into

¹ Churchwardens and Overseers Board Book, May 3, 1850.

² 13 & 14 Ch. II, c. 12.

³ In 1851 the work of the Board of Highway Surveyors was transferred to the City Council, so there was no longer any need for a Vestry meeting in the Parish Church to nominate lists from which the Magistrates appointed Surveyors.

⁴ 1835.

a committee, and raising the necessary funds to get a private Bill through Parliament to set up a new and *ad hoc* body of Commissioners.

Manchester and Salford—which in those early days was a suburb of Manchester—got their first Act in 1765,¹ when their combined population was about 27,000, the second in 1792 when it was over 80,000. The Commissioners appointed under the last Act divided themselves into two bodies and acted separately for the two towns. The Manchester body of Commissioners has been singled out by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb² from the numerous bodies of Commissioners throughout the country as being one of the most enlightened and progressive.

In 1817, without any statutory authority, the ratepayers authorized the Commissioners to manufacture gas. This was used for lighting the streets and supplied to private users. The profits, which were substantial, were devoted to street improvements. The gas-works was managed by a committee of thirty Commissioners appointed for three years, one-third retiring annually. Mr. Fleming, the chairman, and Thomas Wroe, who was appointed manager in 1834 and held the position for many years, were both men of great ability, and prominent amongst the directors was Thomas Potter, who became the first Mayor in 1838. The Town Hall, later the Reference Library in King Street, was built by the Commissioners and opened in 1825.

In 1828³ a third Act was passed. It legalized the separation between Manchester and Salford, and made various other alterations. It was this Act, as amended in some details by the Acts of 1830 and 1832, that was in force in 1838, and it is therefore worth while to examine it in some detail.

Under the 1792 Act any occupier who was assessed to the Poor Rate at a yearly value of £30 was eligible to be a Police Commissioner on coming forward and taking the oath. Although the number attending was usually small and the work was done by committees, when any questions agitated the public as many as eight or nine hundred Commissioners turned up at the meetings. This happened in 1828, when the price of gas was hotly debated.

As a result of the noisy and unmanageable meetings, the Act

¹ 5 Geo. III, c. 81.

² *Statutory Authorities*, pp. 258-273.

³ 9 Geo. IV, c. 117.

of 1828 was secured after a violent agitation over the question of the rating qualifications for the Commissioners, which was fixed at a yearly value of £28. The number was to be limited to two hundred and forty, elected by persons rated at £16 who had paid rates during the previous year. The number of electors in 1836 was given as 4,242 and the number of people qualified to be Commissioners was 3,106.¹ The town was divided into fourteen districts, and two hundred and forty Commissioners were elected by the occupiers in these districts. The number allotted to the districts varied between nine and thirty-six, on a mixed basis of population and rateable value.

The way in which the election was held would seem curious to us nowadays. In 1838 everyone who was entitled to vote had to come to the Town Hall between nine and eleven o'clock, and to avoid congestion polling took place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the different districts being allocated to one or other of these days. Notices of the election had to be given in at least two of the Manchester newspapers seven days before the voting took place. The Churchwardens had to prepare lists of voters and of people eligible for the offices of Commissioners, and these were printed and distributed to any elector who applied for them. On the appointed days a separate room in the Town Hall was set aside for each district, and what was called a district meeting was held when the voters arrived. As soon as nine voters arrived the business started, and the first item was to choose a Chairman. If the Borough Reeve, Constables, Churchwardens and Sidesmen of the Manchester divisions of the Parish of Manchester were present, one of them was to be chosen; if none of these dignitaries was there, then the voters present, by show of hands or by a vote if necessary, would elect one of themselves who was qualified to be a Commissioner. After the Chairman was elected, half an hour was allowed for receiving the votes. There had been no previous nomination, and every voter had to write on a piece of paper one or more names up to the total of the Commissioners allowed to his district. He then had to get the names seconded, and the paper signed by himself and the seconder with their respective residence and descriptions. These papers were handed to the Chairman, who announced the names to the meeting. When the half-hour had

¹ *History of Manchester*, by J. Wheeler (1836), p. 310.

elapsed, the doors were closed and the Chairman then counted the names of the people nominated and compared them with the Churchwardens' list to see if they were eligible. If the number nominated did not exceed the number of Commissioners allowed to the district, no further voting was necessary and the nominated were duly elected. If, however, there were more nominations than vacancies, the names were put into a box and drawn out one by one by the Chairman. They were then proposed to the meeting and each name was voted for by show of hands or by a division. The number for or against each name was put down in writing by the Chairman, and those who were found to have received the largest number of votes were declared elected and, with the Commissioners for other districts, and the Borough Reeve and Constables for the time being, became the body of Commissioners for the township. If a voter occupied premises in more than one district, he could vote in each provided, presumably, that he managed to get into the various rooms during the half-hour allowed.

There was no provision for getting the consent of the persons nominated, nor was there any way for settling for which district a man should be elected. It happened, therefore, that some of the people elected refused to serve and some were elected for more than one district. The Act said that they were to serve for the district that stood first in the scale of numbers, one to fourteen. In order to fill up the vacancies so caused, another election for the districts affected had to be held within ten days after the vacancy had arisen, and notice had to be given in the Manchester newspapers. One-third of the Commissioners, namely eighty, went out of office each year, and which were the first eighty was settled by the drawing of lots.

Thirty of the Commissioners were chosen by their fellows to be gas directors, and ten of these retired each year. The Improvement Committee also consisted of thirty members, one-third of whom also were appointed annually. This Committee carried out the improvements that had been authorized by the various Acts of Parliament.

The Commissioners worked through six sub-committees: (1) Finance and General Purposes, (2) Watch, (3) Lamp, Scavenging, Fire Engine and Hackney Coach, (4) Nuisances, (5) Paving and

Soughing, (6) Accounts. They carried out much of the work that is now done by the City Council, except that the Watch Committee only controlled the night watchmen. Although the Commissioners had power to establish a force of day police also, local jealousy left these men, as we saw, under the separate control of the Court Leet, and the two forces could not go to one another's assistance without the consent of the Constables for the day police and of the Watch Committee of the Commissioners for the night police. Between morning and evening there was a sort of interregnum between day and night police duty. It is difficult to imagine a more inefficient way of keeping order in a large community.

The out-townships of Hulme, Chorlton-on-Medlock and Ardwick had grown with the growth of the parent city, and they had each set up separate bodies of Commissioners.¹ These townships formed part of the Manor of Salford, but they elected their own Constables as well as Overseers. The need for greater powers of government arose, as it had arisen earlier in Manchester and Salford, from the desire for protection of persons and property which carried with it the necessity for lighting the streets.

After the incorporation of these townships with Manchester the separate bodies of Commissioners were dissolved and the powers contained in their local Acts were handed over to the Town Council.

IV

SURVEYORS OF HIGHWAYS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF
MANCHESTER

The necessity for maintaining highways so as to be passable was realized early in our history, and a duty was laid on each parish to maintain its roads. This was done originally by requiring personal service—unpaid labour—in rotation from each inhabitant. Later, people were glad to pay money in order to be relieved of this duty and the Justices had the right to levy a rate at Quarter Sessions if the other methods were found insufficient—as, indeed, in large and populous parishes they very often were. In 1838 there were Sur-

¹ Chorlton-on-Medlock 1822, Hulme 1824, and Ardwick 1825.

veyors for the immense Parish of Manchester,¹ and Surveyors for each of the townships. These were both elected at the Easter Vestry meetings.²

The annual meeting held in April 1837 in the Collegiate Church was typical of all their meetings. There was a small attendance, only fifty being present, and the Chaplain of the Collegiate Church took the chair. The Churchwardens and Sidesmen were first elected and then a ratepayer proposed six names as Surveyors of Highways for the parish. These were elected without discussion. Then a list of ten names was proposed as Surveyors of the township. James Murray and William Neild, later Aldermen of the town, and James Wroe, the Radical member of the Police Commissioners, were amongst the list; also Lewis Williams, who served the Board of Surveyors for many years.

Then a discussion ensued, more outspoken than any discussions on the same topics nowadays. The Rev. J. Scholefield, the doctor-preacher of the Round House Chapel in Every Street, Ancoats, accused Mr. Williams, who had been Chairman of the Board for the previous year, of having improved certain small streets in the neighbourhood of his own mills, and of entirely overlooking Every Street itself. Mr. Williams replied that the delay in paving Every Street was wholly due to the difficulty in getting material. No time would be lost once the material was procured, he promised, and finally he said that he had made every exertion to finish the part near Dr. Scholefield's house and chapel. These annual Vestry meetings were the only opportunity for a ratepayer to criticize or to ask for information; no report seems to have been presented, although the accounts had to be passed. These had been previously open to inspection for several days by any ratepayer at the Minshull Street office.

The Surveyors, like all the other elected officers, were only elected for one year, but the custom seems to have grown up even by 1820 of re-electing most of the members time after time. Why this eminently suitable arrangement was not also followed by the Churchwardens and Overseers is not known. The Assistant-

¹ These had only existed since 1819, when a local Act, 59 Geo. III, c. 22, authorized their election and gave them powers to levy a rate for the upkeep of certain highways for which the separate townships were not responsible.

² Until the Highways Act, 1835 (4 & 5 Will. IV, c. 50), they had been elected at Vestry meetings in September, and then appointed by the Justices at Special Highway Sessions.

Surveyor was the paid official, and there was a staff under him of clerks and collectors, for the Highway Rate was separately collected. The Board met every Friday morning at ten o'clock at the office in Minshull Street and was open to the Press.

When we come to consider the relations between the Surveyors of Highways and the Paving andoughing Committee of the Police Commissioners, we find that state of confusion that even now seems inseparable from the administration of roads, perhaps because they are used for so many different purposes and by so many different bodies. Drains, gas and water pipes, and electricity cables have to go under the road, telegraph and telephone wires above it, tramway lines and lamp standards on it. The surface has to be paved, kept in repair, widened, drained and cleansed when it becomes a public highway. The ancient duty of the landowner to drain and pave his frontage before it could be taken over by the public authority was enforced by the Police Commissioners, not by the Highway Surveyors. The Commissioner either made the owner do it, or did it at his expense, which is the method still used by our Paving Committee.

Once a road was put in good repair it could be declared a public highway, and after that it was repaired by the Surveyors of Highways out of the rates. The Police Commissioners were, however, responsible for making all the sewers and for all widenings and improvements. The relation between the duties of the two Committees is not clear. Sometimes the Highway Surveyors inspected streets before they were taken over as public highways, sometimes the Improvement Committee of the Commissioners, but only the Surveyors were able to declare roads public highways.

Apparently the Surveyors also often carried out work on behalf of the Police Commissioners, as well as for the Surveyors of other townships and occasionally for the owners of private streets, for which they were paid.

The relationship between the two bodies, Police Commissioners and Surveyors, serving the same area and both collecting rates from the same people, shows that a hundred years ago, as to-day, each committee tried to push any possible cost on to another committee, although it all comes out of the rates.

Confusion between the work of the two bodies was probably avoided by common membership. Some of the Surveyors were

also Police Commissioners and members of their Improvement Committee. But that did not prevent confusion in the minds of the public. At the annual meeting in the Collegiate Church in 1844 to elect Highway Surveyors, a year after the Police Commissioners had been absorbed by the Town Council, one man said that the pavement of a street at Corkgates had been pulled up by the Surveyors two years ago and never put down, another that unnecessary new paving had been laid down in High Street and Lever Street. The Chairman, Lewis Williams, explained that in both cases the fault was that of the late Commissioners of Police, not of the Surveyors: "You mix up paving done under the Police Act with that of the Surveyors."

"There is Mr. Francis—he has choked up a sough," said a ratepayer.

Mr. Williams: "He is not our servant, I tell you, you confound the Commissioners' work with that of the Surveyors'." (Laughter.)

The turnpike roads,¹ portions of which ran through the city boundaries of Manchester and the out-townships, were, of course, maintained by the Turnpike Trusts. The Trustees consisted of persons possessing a certain amount of property and of the Justices of the Peace for the locality. These Trustees erected turnpikes and tollbars and gates on any part of the road under their jurisdiction. Foot passengers went free, but there was a scale of charges ranging from one penny to sixpence for horses, cattle, wagons, carriages, etc. Double tolls were usually charged on Sundays. The tollbars on Oxford Road, Oldham Road, Rochdale Road, Bury Old and New Roads and Chester Road were abolished at various dates, but in 1838 they existed and were placed at intervals of a few miles.

"The institution of Turnpike Trusts with a revenue from tolls did not however free the inhabitants of each Parish from the responsibility towards the road. For many years before 1812 the Surveyors of the township of Manchester had paid to the Trustees of the Oldham Turnpike Trust £100 from the Highway rates."² But the Highway Surveyors had no control over the Turnpike Trustees.

The Highway Surveyors were not superseded by the Town Council. They continued in existence until 1851, when the Manchester Improvement Act of that year made the Council the highway

¹ They were Oxford Road, Oldham Road, Rochdale Road, Chester Road, and Bury New and Old Roads.

² *Statutory Authorities*, by S. and B. Webb, p. 168 note.

authority. Their work was taken over by the Paving Committee that had eight years before absorbed the work of the Paving and Soughing Committee of the Police Commissioners.

v

THE JUSTICES

From the various references to the Justices it is clear that these dignitaries exercised much wider administrative powers a hundred years ago than they do now. We are accustomed to think of magistrates chiefly as sitting in the police courts and dealing with the offences that are brought before them by the police. We know that they also sign recommendations for passport regulations, vaccination exemptions, etc., that they visit the prison, and that a selected few of them, called Licensing Justices, sit at Brewster Sessions, dealing with licences for public-houses. But a hundred years ago, and for centuries before that, a great part of the local government, not only in the country but in the towns, was in the hands of the Justices. Their administrative duties were fully as important as their judicial functions. They appointed the Overseers, elected by the Vestry.¹ They were responsible for seeing that the roads and bridges were kept in proper repair. It was under their precept that the Poor Rates and Highway Rates were levied. They were empowered to visit the workhouse² and inquire into its management, and they had the right, which they constantly exercised in Manchester, of ordering the Overseers to give out-relief in cases in which it had been refused. The exercise of this power caused much friction between the two bodies, and the Overseers appointed each month two of their members to attend weekly at the New Bailey Court, where poor people exercised their right to appeal to the Justices, in order to see that the point of view of the Overseers was represented. This did not always result in the Justices upholding the Overseers' decision. Between 1827 and 1837 John Frederick Foster, who was the Chairman of Quarter Sessions, frequently ordered relief to the Irish poor when it had been refused by the Overseers. The Overseers hoped in this way to discourage

¹ See above, p. 47.

² Under the local Act 30 Geo. III, c. 81.

the Irish from remaining in the town, although they did not go to the length of applying for their removal. In reply to a letter from the Churchwardens, Mr. Foster said¹ that he was glad that he had saved these people from removal as, although the Irish workmen had not any legal settlement in Manchester, they had spent the best part of their lives in the manufactories of this town. He described them as people "without whose labour, I may safely assume that the manufactures would never have attained their present importance." Curious though it seems to us now to think of the magistrates, with no staff to make the necessary inquiries, ordering out-relief against the decision of a Public Assistance Committee, in those days the Justices were often the only defence of the poor against harsh decisions taken by a body of self-educated men, who had not at that date even to submit their proceedings to any body like the Board of Guardians or later the City Council.

The Justices managed the New Bailey Prison and they had important functions with regard to rates. Before incorporation, Manchester and the out-townships were liable to contribute to the County Rate.² The total amount was divided amongst all the townships in the Hundred of Salford, and the precept by two Justices for this payment was issued quarterly. In 1838, for instance, the township of Hulme had to pay about £90 a quarter for this County Rate. The ratepayers had no control over this expenditure, and we can agree with Lord John Russell when he said: "The principle of our constitution that no taxes or rates should be levied except by popular consent, is grossly violated by the raising of large sums by virtue of the orders of the magistrates named by the Crown upon the advice of the Lord Chancellor."

The large township of Manchester was as much a part of the county for the purposes of justice as the smallest rural hamlet. There were no Manchester Justices, but four of the sixty-seven appointed for the Hundred of Salford acted for the Division of Manchester, which included Salford and forty-one other townships. A stipendiary magistrate had been appointed in 1813³ at a salary of £1,000, of which seven-eighths was paid by Manchester and one-eighth by Salford.

In 1838 Daniel Maude was the Stipendiary, and he sat every

¹ Churchwardens' and Overseers Board Book, November 28, 1837.

² See below, p. 63.

³ 53 Geo. III, c. 72.

day except Sunday in Petty Sessions at the New Bailey Court House, assisted by the county magistrates in rotation. Oswald Milne, the solicitor, of whom we shall hear more in our next chapter, was Clerk to the Magistrates for the Division of Manchester. John Frederick Foster was Chairman of Quarter Sessions. There was a County Court which heard claims up to £10, held every month before the Assessor to the High Sheriff by adjournment from Preston, and a Court of Requests held fortnightly which dealt with larger sums. The County Assizes were held at Liverpool and Lancaster.

Students of local government history will remember that when the Municipal Corporations Bill of 1835 was first introduced in the House of Commons power was given to the Town Councils to elect magistrates. One of the compromises that the House of Lords forced on the Government was the deletion of this clause and the substitution of one vesting these appointments in the Crown. However, for some years after 1835 Lord John Russell, who was Home Secretary, used to appoint the men whose names were sent up by the councils. Even when this custom ended, a close connection, becoming looser as the century advanced, has existed between the borough magistrates and the City Council. The Lord Mayor is the Chief Magistrate, but out of a hundred and seventy magistrates to-day, only forty-seven are members of the City Council, whereas in 1839 there were fourteen members of the Council amongst the thirty-four magistrates.

The establishment of the Town Council in 1838 and the Boards of Guardians in 1841, took from the magistrates much of their already diminishing administrative powers, although they continued in Manchester to approve the appointment of Highway Surveyors until 1851 and of Overseers until 1899.

RATES IN 1838

Such was the government, or misgovernment, of Manchester a hundred years ago. How was it paid for?

There were six separate rates: the Poor Rate, Police Rate, High-

way Rate, County Rate, Rate for Stipendiary Magistrate's Salary and the Church Rate.

The Poor Rate, the most important of these, was raised by the Churchwardens and Overseers. In 1838 it was 1s. 6d. in the pound for the township of Manchester, and the amount raised that year was about £29,000. This covered the expenses of indoor and outdoor relief, the cost of the day police and also the sum due towards the County Rate.¹ Other demands might be made upon it. For instance, when cholera visited the town in 1832 and the Special Board of Health, to which we have referred, was formed to set up the cholera hospitals, whitewash infected houses and make other arrangements for the victims, money from the Poor Rate was handed over to the Board of Health by the Churchwardens after a public meeting of leypayers had sanctioned the payment. This procedure was followed throughout England, even before Parliament made it legal in 1832.

The Police Rate, raised by the Improvement and Police Commissioners, was limited by the Acts which set them up to 1s. 6d. in the pound, and was actually 1s. 3d. in 1838. The assessment for the Poor Rate was also used for this rate, which paid for the body of night police, fire engineers, street lighting by gas, and cleansing. Any dwelling assessed at £4 10s. or less was exempt from this rate, as was a house that was more than a hundred yards from a street lamp²—an attempt to fit payment to benefits received.

The Highway Rate was raised by the Surveyors of Highways, also on the Poor Rate assessment. There was a separate rate for each of the townships, and also one to which all the townships in the parish of Manchester had to contribute to pay for the roads which were a parochial responsibility. Thus in 1839 the Justices, in a special session of the Highways for the Division of Manchester, authorized £780 to be raised for this purpose. The amount for each township was levied in the same way as the County Rate, and we find that Hulme was assessed at £29. The Highway Rate of the township of Manchester had also to bear the interest and sinking fund of the loan for the big Market Street improvement begun in 1821 as well as for the expenditure on its public highways.

The Poor Rate and the Highway Rate, raised by different bodies,

¹ See below, p. 63.

² 11 Geo. IV, c. 47, sec. 107.

had both to be allowed by the Justices before they could be legally collected. This practice had, by 1838, come to be as nominal as the appointment by the Justices of the Highway Surveyors or Overseers. But there was more justification for the control by the Justices in the case of rates, as the various Boards were under no obligation to get their rate confirmed by a public meeting. They had to submit their accounts to the public annually in the case of the Overseers and Highway Surveyors, quarterly in the case of Constables, but the rate that they levied did not have to be passed by any public body.¹

The County Rate. The various townships that later made up the municipality of Manchester were liable, before incorporation, for that part of the County Rate which paid for prisons, the lunatic asylum, the salaries of the Chairman of Quarter Sessions, the Treasurer and the County Coroner, for the maintenance of the county bridges within the Hundred of Salford and, occasionally, for damage for riots. There is no record of a separate collection of the County Rate in any of the townships, so that the amount demanded was probably included by the Overseers in the Poor Rate—that compendium of all the oddments of rates.

There was still another rate, that for the salary of the *Stipendiary Magistrate* which the township of Manchester shared with Salford.² This rate was raised by the Police Improvement Commissioners with the Police Rate. Prisoners were brought to this court from all over the Division of Manchester, which included thirty-six townships in addition to those near Manchester—Hulme, Ardwick, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Cheetham and Beswick. The majority of the prisoners came from Manchester and these townships, and one of the reasons for incorporating them with Manchester, which certainly weighed with the Privy Council Commissioners, was the fact that the township of Manchester was paying practically the whole cost of the *Stipendiary*.

Lastly there was the *Church Rate* which, however, a few years before our story opens, had ceased to be compulsory in Manchester. This rate was of very ancient origin, and was originally levied to maintain the fabric of the Parish Church. Some of the money raised by the Church Rate also went towards the upkeep of churches

¹ When the Town Council was established it had power to levy the Borough Rate without applying to the Justices.

² See above, p. 60.

such as St. Matthew's Campfield, St. George's Hulme and St. Andrew's Travis Street, which had been built out of the money granted by Parliament in 1815.

There was a special meeting called each July to levy the Church Rate, which was usually no more than 1d. in the pound.¹ It was raised on the Poor Rate assessments and collected with it. Quakers, at least, in Manchester were exempt, but Nonconformists all over the country had been protesting against the rate for years, and in 1832 it was generally expected that the Reform Parliament would deal with the question. However, nothing was done and in 1833 Thomas Potter and some of his friends went to the public meeting of leypayers and carried a motion that no rate was necessary, and that the meeting be adjourned for six months. The Churchwardens then demanded a poll under the Sturges Bourne Act which allotted votes according to property, one ratepayer having six times as many as another. Again the Churchwardens were defeated in a poll of over 7,000. They then demanded a scrutiny of the voting lists, and apparently satisfied themselves that the majority should have been on their side, for they levied the rate. Many, however, refused to pay it. The following year the same thing happened. Thomas Potter and his friends again moved and carried a resolution that no rate was necessary; again there was a poll, which supported the decision of the public meeting, this time by a majority of over a thousand on a poll of 12,850; again the Churchwardens demanded a scrutiny. This was carried out by their own supporters, including their legal adviser, Oswald Milne, and when they again levied the rate many refused to pay.

The following year there was a large and noisy meeting. The Chairman said that they wished to levy a rate of 1d., which would realize £1,500, that the Parish Church and two others needed beautifying, and that some of the churches required plate. Mr. Hadfield said that the Churchwardens had no right to levy a rate if the parish meeting refused its sanction, and that parishioners were not compelled to make a rate. Mr. Potter asked them to withdraw their proposal and to raise the money by subscription. He himself offered £50, but the suggestion was refused. The uproar was

¹ There was no statutory authority for the Church Rate; it could only be levied if the parishioners agreed. (See *English Poor Law History*, vol. i, "The Old Poor Law," p. 15, by S. and B. Webb.)

increased when four beadles, members of the day police force, came in and walked up to the parish table. No one knew on whose instructions they had been summoned, but Mr. Pryce, one of the Constables, prudently ordered them to withdraw.

The vote against a rate was carried almost unanimously, and the Churchwardens, realizing that they were beaten and that a third poll would reveal an even greater majority than that of the last two years, announced that they did not intend to apply for one. This announcement "was received with cheers such as probably never before were heard within the venerable walls of the ancient edifice."¹

From that date no attempt was made to force payment, and the amount of the rate on the demand note for the Poor Rate had "optional" written against it. Many of the leaders of the movement against the compulsory rate, Mr. Thomas Potter and his dissenting colleagues, pledged themselves to pay the rate voluntarily on their property. When in 1838 they were in control of the new Corporation, they saw that the rate was paid on Corporation property. In 1850, however, the question of the legality of this procedure was raised in the Council, and the Town Clerk ruled that there was no power to use the ratepayers' money in this way. This decision of the Council must have meant a considerable reduction in the Churchwardens' revenue, and in 1852, when they had been dissociated from the Overseers² and had lost all control over the ordinary rates, they requested the Overseers to delete the word "optional" from the Church Rate amount in the demand note. The Overseers agreed, so that ratepayers who did not realize that the rate had no legal status paid it. In 1868, however, Parliament at last dealt with the matter, and from that date the payment became optional all over the country.³ The Manchester Overseers were therefore forced to re-insert "optional" in the demand note.⁴

Compounding.—There were very many small assessments in 1838. Out of the 34,535 in the township of Manchester, 10,000, or more than one-third, were under £4 10s. These were mostly small cottages and cellar dwellings. A cellar with the rent of 1s. 6d. a week, for instance, was assessed at 3s. 4d. for one year's Poor

¹ *Manchester Times*, July 11, 1835.

² See above p. 51.

³ 31 & 32 Vic., c. 109.

⁴ The last year that this rate was collected by the Overseers was 1927.

Rate. It was only possible to collect such small amounts by compounding agreements with the landlord. This difficulty was not peculiar to Manchester, and in 1819 an Act of Parliament had been passed¹ which allowed the Vestry to resolve that the owners of premises between £6 and £20 yearly rental, which were let at periods for less than three months, should be assessed instead of the occupiers. In return for an agreement by which the landlords undertook to pay the rates whether the houses were occupied or empty, thus ensuring regular payment and saving the cost of collection, the landlords were allowed to make a deduction from the rates due. This Act was permissive, that is to say, it only operated in those parishes where it was adopted by a meeting of inhabitants. Once it was adopted it became compulsory to rate the owners instead of the occupiers of these houses.

The Act was adopted by a Vestry meeting of the inhabitants of Manchester in 1822 in spite of some opposition. The following year the question was brought up again at the Vestry meeting, and the decision reversed. It is easy to understand this opposition. Up to that time no real attempt had been made by the Overseers to collect the Poor Rate from property below £10 value because of the trouble and expense of collection. Whole streets were written off on account of poverty. However, the Overseers, who had found the Act advantageous, decided to continue the arrangement, so they—quite illegally—ignored the Vestry, and compounding continued.

From an investigation of the rate books for 1838 it is clear that compounding was not by any means general, neither was the amount of the allowances to the owners uniform. We find often that the full rate on poor property which was not compounded for was excused, and so it is easy to understand that the Overseers found it to their advantage to offer liberal allowances to owners who were ready to pay rates, whether their houses were occupied or not. The practice seems to have been to make an allowance of 50 per cent on the lowest rated houses, and a smaller percentage as the amount of the rate increased, but there were many exceptions.

The system of compounding continued for many years to the mutual advantage of landlords and Overseers, but there came a day

¹ 59 Geo. III, c. 12.

of reckoning. In 1857 the Poor Law Auditor decided that as the permissive Act had not been adopted by the Vestry, the Overseers had no power to allow deductions from the rates, and that they must be surcharged. As for the whole of the twenty-three years during which their accounts had been audited, the deductions had been allowed, the Overseers were naturally indignant. Finally the Local Government Board decided to remit the surcharge if the Overseers took steps to legalize the position in future, and the Manchester Overseers Act of 1858 was the result.

The Police, Highway and Poor Rates were separately collected, although one assessment was used.

The total of the rates raised in 1838 was £75,000, just under 4s. in the pound, a state of things at which the present ratepayer might look back with envy, until he stopped to think how few municipal services were provided then compared with those which he now receives: no education, no public health provision, no main drainage, no parks, libraries or swimming-baths, no municipal houses, badly paved roads (when there was any paving at all), very little refuse collected, large parts of the town badly lit and two small and inefficient police forces. If he now pays 16s. instead of 4s., he gets better value for his money.

VII

CONCLUSION

This brief sketch of the government of Manchester a hundred years ago shows that it was shared by five different authorities: the Borough Reeve and Constables, the Police and Improvement Commissioners, the Churchwardens and Overseers, the Surveyors of Highways, and the Justices of the Hundred of Salford.

There was a property qualification for membership of some, but not of all of these governing bodies. The Borough Reeve, Constables, and the Court Leet jury were chosen from the aristocracy of the town—the leading business and professional men. Shopkeepers were, by an unwritten law, never chosen. Justices had, by law, to possess real estate to the annual value of £100, and the Police Commissioners of the township of Manchester had

to possess property of £28 rateable value.¹ Churchwardens and Overseers were not required by law to possess any qualifications but that of residence, but by custom it was again the prominent Churchmen who were elected each year, usually by a small meeting of their friends.

Surveyors of Highways had to be "substantial inhabitants,"² occupiers of land or premises worth £30 a year, and again in Manchester we find the names of prominent business men amongst them, some of whom were at the same time Police Commissioners.

Each of the bodies was differently elected or appointed and, with the exception of the Police and Improvement Commissioners, elected for one year only. The principle of annual election applied also to the paid officials, the Deputy Constable, Assistant Overseers and the Assistant Surveyors, although common sense procured—in the township of Manchester at least—the re-election of these officials each year. They had, however, no security of tenure and, with the exception of the Board of Surveyors—of which several members served for many years—had to deal every year with a fresh Chairman. What is more striking is to find that, with the exception of the Police and Improvement Commissioners, who worked through Committees responsible to the whole body of Commissioners, the executive in each case, namely, the Borough Reeve and Constables, the Board of Churchwardens and Overseers, the Board of Highway Surveyors, had no body intermediate between them and the body of electors to which they had to submit their actions. The general body of leypayers, or as they were correctly described, "the inhabitants in vestry assembled," met once a year and elected Churchwardens, Overseers, Highway Surveyors, and passed their accounts, but they had no control over them until the next year, when they elected a fresh set. One exception was, as we have seen, the Constables, who had to submit their accounts to the general body of leypayers once a quarter before they could be paid, and were, therefore, open to criticism, but the Constables were the only people not popularly elected but appointed by the Court Leet.

This system, which possibly sufficed in the far-off days when Manchester and all its surrounding townships were small villages,

¹ In Hulme £25, in Chorlton-on-Medlock £20, and in Ardwick £30.

² 13 Geo. III, c. 78.

in which everyone knew everyone else, and where the doings of the officers could be discussed every Sunday when the parishioners met at the Parish Church, was hopelessly inadequate for a collection of townships of nearly 300,000 inhabitants. One of the great advantages brought about by the establishment of the Town Council was the existence of an elected body to which the various committees were responsible. Although local government a hundred years ago covered a much smaller field than it does to-day, even then it was impossible for the general body of ratepayers to exercise any informed control over it. A popularly elected body, interposed between the committees responsible for the different sides of the work and the general body of electors, and open to the Press, is the best device yet invented for securing fair administration and intelligent criticism.

CHAPTER III

THE FIGHT FOR THE CHARTER

I

A WRITER of the history of another part of England in 1832 said, "England in very ancient times was productive of cunning framers of constitutions. Very few towns in the kingdom are governed by the same laws; and while many of them have whimsical, many more have exceedingly beautiful schemes of government."¹

Nobody could describe the government of Manchester in 1838 as an "exceedingly beautiful scheme," "whimsical" would be the more appropriate adjective, for it certainly grew up without plan. The solution of the problems of sanitation and police that the sudden and vast accumulation in towns of people accustomed to the standard of country living, and even of the much lower standard of rural Ireland, was totally beyond the powers of the existing forms of government.

To the middle class the chief need of the town in years in which "turnouts," as strikes were called, rioting by the unemployed and the poverty-stricken handloom weavers, and political demonstrations, were frequent, appeared to be an efficient body of police with powers over the contiguous out-townships. A separate day and night police, each unable to come to the assistance of the other without the consent of specially summoned committees, and a day force of only thirty-four constables, did not ensure the speedy assistance which was necessary when starving men were rioting. In the case of large demonstrations known to the authorities beforehand, there was usually time to get the military to the scene of action, but small bodies of incendiaries could act quickly and without warning. In any case, we know from a letter from Colonel Wemyss, who was the adjutant in this district, that he much disliked this constant appeal for the soldiers. "Experience shows," he

¹ *History of Northumberland*, by the Rev. J. Hodgson, Part II, p. 429. Quoted by S. and B. Webb in *The Manor and the Borough*, p. 367.

wrote,¹ "that the civil authorities, generally speaking and not at all alluding to Manchester in particular, are too fond of calling upon the military, in short, expecting the duty which the civil force ought to be adequate to perform to be done by the soldiers, a practice which might lead to serious mischief and induce a belief, however erroneous, that the people are only kept in subjection by sabres and bayonets." The lesson of Peterloo had not been forgotten by wise men.

Once the military were summoned and provided with a magistrate to read the Riot Act, they could act without any consideration of boundaries, but the police of all the nine townships within the parliamentary borough of Manchester were under separate bodies, very jealous of their independence. A thief had only to cross the Medlock in Oxford Street and the police in Manchester had to stop the pursuit. If no member of the Chorlton-on-Medlock police happened to be on the spot, the thief had an easy escape. The interval between the duties of the day and night police in all the townships offered a temptation to the "evil-disposed" which they did not resist. We can well understand how a uniform and efficient combined day and night police force, able to operate over all the townships which made up the real area of Manchester, appeared to the business men of the day to be the most urgent necessity.

The movement for a reform of the government, after several earlier abortive attempts, had begun in 1820, the year after Peterloo, when a committee under the Borough Reeve was appointed to submit to the Crown a plan for a charter for Manchester. The Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, and the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, promised their assistance but, before anything could be done, the annual change of officers brought in a new Borough Reeve and new Constables who were not favourable to any change. Nothing more happened for twelve years, when, in 1832, the year of the Reform Act, a meeting in the Town Hall was called by the magistrates of the division, the Borough Reeve, Benjamin Braidley, and the Constables, to consider the expediency of providing a more efficient police system for Manchester and the adjoining townships. J. F. Foster, then the Stipendiary Magistrate, presided. There was a discussion in which widespread complaint

¹ Letter to Capt. Jebb, Privy Council Papers, 1838.

of the present system was made, but no satisfactory remedy was proposed.

The Parliament elected under the Reform Act of 1832 had not exhausted its zeal by that Act. Everyone realized that the reform of local government must follow that of Parliament because municipal corporations—many of whom were self-appointed and corrupt—had rights of nomination to Parliament. In 1833, the year of the reform of Scottish municipal government, Lord Brougham, who was Lord Chancellor in the Whig Government, introduced a Bill on his own responsibility—it was afterwards dropped—to provide for the better government of certain towns which had been made into parliamentary boroughs by the Reform Act of 1832, but which had no proper municipal institutions. Manchester was one of these towns, and although the parliamentary life of the Bill was short, two Commissioners, Major Wylde, R.A., and Mr. Power, barrister, were sent down by the Government to make out a scheme for the division into wards of the area covered by the parliamentary borough, namely, the seven townships of Manchester, Hulme, Ardwick, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Cheetham, Newton, Harpurhey, Bradford and Beswick. There was no suggestion at that time that the municipal borough should be different from the parliamentary borough. No official statement was ever made about this visit, but as the visiting commissioners were discussing the question with leading men of all parties, it was only natural that rumours should get about, and rouse the opposition of those people always to be found in any community who object to any alteration of the *status quo*. A meeting to protest against incorporation with Manchester was called by the Constables of Chorlton-on-Medlock. However, the Bill was dropped—it is not known why—and the next step taken by the Government was the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into municipal corporations.

When the Royal Commission reported in 1835, the revelations of corruption and inefficiency provided the motive for drastic reform. The Municipal Corporations Act abolished the existing corporations and substituted a body elected on a franchise intended to be much wider than the £10 parliamentary franchise but which, as a matter of fact, proved to be in most cases a narrower one.¹ However, a form of popular election was substituted for self-election.

¹ The question of the municipal franchise is fully discussed in Appendix I.

Whilst this Bill was going through Parliament, reformers in Manchester had followed its progress with interest, and, when the opponents of the measure tried to delay its passage by calling for further evidence from the old corporations, Thomas Potter and George Hadfield drove off to London in a post-chaise and four, with a petition against delay, signed by over twenty-two thousand inhabitants. Their method of collecting signatures would hardly commend itself to us nowadays. It was stated by the Duke of Newcastle in the House of Lords, and not denied, that the petition had been "got up in the way in which such petitions very frequently were—by obtaining the signatures of persons who were perfectly incompetent to affix their signatures to it. . . . It was by placing tables at the corners of the public streets and getting at such persons as could just scribble their names to put them down; as the boys came out at their dinner hour, they were called to sign their names, not one of them knowing what they were signing."¹

The Act² only applied to existing corporations, but provision was made for other towns to be granted a similar charter by the Privy Council upon application by the inhabitant householders. It was not stated that this should be by a "majority," and much controversy later centred round this point. Under this section Birmingham and Bolton also gained charters in 1838.

In 1836 a small meeting was held in Manchester composed of individuals of all parties "to consider approaching the Borough Reeve and Constables to ask them to call a public meeting in order to send a petition to the Crown for a charter, under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act." About twenty attended, and William Neild, who had been a Constable in 1835, took the chair. This meeting was followed by another, at which the police authorities for the several townships included in the parliamentary borough were present. It was agreed that the townships should be incorporated so that there could be one force in the area for both day and night police. The meeting was not unanimous, and opposition was threatened from some residents in Chorlton-on-Medlock and Newton. A committee was appointed to go into the question in more detail, and the need for an alteration of the existing system was so clearly proved, that a requisition for a public meeting of leypayers was made to the authorities. The

¹ *Cobden as a Citizen*, by W. E. A. Axon, p. 5.

² 5 & 6 Will. IV, c. 76.

object of this meeting was stated to be to consider applying to Parliament for an Act to consolidate the day and night police of the borough. This was not quite the same thing as applying for a charter, for the police forces could have been united under a body of Commissioners acting for the whole borough, with none of the other powers that a Town Council possesses under a charter. The change was made by William Neild to meet the opposition to incorporation that had been shown at the first meeting. The requisition was signed by three hundred and seventy leading men of all and every party from all the townships, including five ex-Borough Reeves, nine ex-Constables, and nearly a hundred of the most influential "Conservatives." The meeting was held on February 9, 1837, in the Town Hall, with the Borough Reeve, John Hyde, in the chair. Events moved differently, however, from what the organizers of the meeting had anticipated.

Opposition came from the die-hard Manchester Tories who suspected that this was merely a Whig dodge to get a charter by indirect means. A section of the Tory party in Parliament had only been prevented by Sir Robert Peel, and by Lord John Russell's willingness to compromise, from wrecking the Municipal Corporations Bill. The first elections under it in those towns where old corporations existed had resulted—as in Liverpool—in a Whig majority, so there was every reason why strong party Tories should fear the same result in Manchester. There were other opponents too. The Radicals, most of whom were later to be known as Chartists, were bitterly opposed to the Whigs, partly for what they considered the betrayal of the Reform Act, which had not granted universal suffrage, and partly because many of them, especially in Lancashire, were opposed to the new Poor Law of 1834, another Whig measure, and were afraid that it would be introduced into Manchester. These people were also not so anxious as were the business men for a more efficient police force, for in those days the police were considered, and with justice, as a weapon of the well-to-do to be used against the poor. The promoters of the meeting were faced by a crowd consisting of many who could not be described in the manner of the day as "respectable inhabitants," and who were probably not all ratepayers. Their cries of "Bourbon police!" and "Bastille workhouses!" mixed with opposition from Chorlton-on-Medlock against being joined with

Manchester. William Neild explained that the proposal before the meeting had nothing to do with the Municipal Corporations Act or with the new Poor Law, but, although the resolution was finally carried, the opposition had been so strong that the matter was dropped. This was the last that we hear of this particular method of improving the forces of law and order, and at a Conservative Association dinner, two months later, the assertion that Manchester did not wish to be incorporated was loudly cheered.

II

Defeated though they were for the moment, the protagonists of better municipal government returned to the attack the following October, when the usual meeting of the Court Leet was held. We saw that the Borough Reeve and Constables had to be men who actually resided within the Manor, that was, within the boundaries of the township. But Manchester was becoming more and more unsuitable and undesirable as a residential quarter because of the increase of smoke, and more suitable as a commercial and industrial centre for the expanding area of South-East Lancashire. It had been difficult at the Court Leet of 1836 to find suitable men to hold these offices, and the fine of £100 for non-compliance with the choice of the jury had been paid that year. In October 1837¹ William Neild was elected but refused to serve. Although he pleaded ill-health, and that he had served as Constable two years before, he took the opportunity in his speech to dilate on the subject of the impossible and antiquated means of choosing the chief public officer, which had come to such a pass that "in Manchester no one could be found to accept it." "He would ask them if a town like this, with a police as impotent in principle as futile in its attempts to discharge business which devolved upon it, ought to remain in its present state, having got for its officers not men, as in the other towns, contending for the appointment and ready to sacrifice everything to obtain it, but gentlemen appointed in opposition to their wills (merely because residents), and brought forward like culprits and obliged to take office."

As, in spite of every argument, Mr. Neild^{*} stuck to his refusal,

¹ See above, p. 33.

the Deputy Steward of the Court pronounced him in contempt of court, and the Steward then rose and said that it was his duty to inflict a fine upon him. As the fine last year had not proved sufficient to deter persons from refusing to obey the Court, he would have to inflict a heavier one, namely £200. Mr. Neild protested against such a fine, saying that for the last ten years "no inconsiderable portion of his time had been devoted to public service," because "he thought that every man enjoying the benefit of valuable public institutions was called upon to perform his quota of the public duties attached to them." When the business of the Court was finished the jurors received tickets entitling them to participate in a dinner at the expense of the Lord of the Manor. "Well, what in the world does all this mean?" Cobden, who was one of the jury, asked. "Is it that in this great town of Manchester we are still living under the feudal system? Does Sir Oswald Mosley, living up in Derbyshire, send his mandate down here for us to come into this dingy hole to elect a government for Manchester, and go and get a ticket for soup at his expense? Why, now I will put an end to this thing."¹

At the second meeting of the Court two days later the jury memorialized Sir Oswald Mosley to remit the fine, which he did. They also signed a declaration drawn up by Cobden, pointing out the impossible position which had arisen, and stating that they earnestly hoped and recommended that immediate steps might be taken to remedy the evil. After Cobden had withdrawn a clause which suggested incorporation, it was signed by all the jurors consisting of men of both parties. Cobden then wrote to Neild asking for his co-operation in a different line of attack, and Neild replied, "I have tried my way and it does not answer; I will go with you; all I stipulate is that you will not take any course but what is consistent with morality and honour, and I will join you in any way you may choose in order to put an end to this state of things."

The final and successful battle for the charter now began. It lasted just a year—the charter was received in October 1838—and was marked by extreme bitterness. Although there were some members of the Conservative party on the pro-charter side, the main opposition came from the Tories, and from Radicals who were

¹ *Cobden as a Citizen*, by W. E. A. Axon, p. 20.

bitterly opposed to Whigs and all their measures. Even those Conservatives who realized the need for an efficient and unified police force and who could not defend the obsolete Court Leet government, felt a strong political dislike of the Municipal Corporations Act, as a Whig measure. The political situation was not very stable. In the first Parliament elected on the reformed franchise in 1833, the Whigs had a majority of 314, but the Tories had steadily gained, and in November 1837 the Whig majority was only 38. The authors of the Manchester petition to the Privy Council early in 1838 were probably right in ascribing to the Conservatives a wish to delay any municipal reform "in the hope of getting something by a possible change in the Administration," for the arguments adduced against the charter were, with one exception, not calculated to prevail against the overwhelming case on the other side. The exception was the one that has always been used against any reform of this kind, namely, fear of an increase in rates. The Municipal Corporations Act gave power to levy a Borough Rate in addition to existing rates and, although consolidation of the night and day police and of the police forces of the out-townships would give greater efficiency, it was generally agreed that the number of men would have to be increased. Although some saving would undoubtedly be effected, the ratepayers could not expect an extension of services without additional cost. There was also the question of forcing the out-townships into union with Manchester, a question that roused parochial feeling then, as always, amongst those unable to take the larger view.

There is no evidence that Sir Oswald Mosley either took part in or inspired the opposition. During the controversy he evidently made some inquiries from the Privy Council as to whether there should be a clause in the Manchester charter safeguarding his manorial rights, but the legal adviser to the Crown stated quite clearly that the "Corporation Act does not interfere with any private rights, and that tolls of the market will belong to Sir Oswald Mosley and also his manorial officers as much after the Corporation Act as before."

The chief inspirer of the opposition was Oswald Milne, the solicitor, who was Clerk to the Justices of the Division, legal adviser to the Stipendiary, to the Police Commissioners, to the Borough Reeve and Constables, to the Churchwardens and Over-

seers, to the Surveyors of Highways, and to every public body in Manchester, and who claimed later to have been "Town Clerk in everything but the name." He realized that, if Manchester became a municipal borough, Petty Sessions with their own clerk would be substituted for the sessions held by the county magistrates of the Division of Manchester to which he acted as clerk, and that sooner or later the Council would exercise the powers given by the Act, and abolish the various bodies of Police Commissioners, so that the most lucrative part of his practice would disappear. He was making over £4,000 a year out of the fees and emoluments from these two posts alone. To those who knew the facts Cobden's argument that a salaried Town Clerk would "save thousands of pounds to the ratepayers" was no exaggeration. There was still a further ramification of the Milne interest. John Milne, brother of Oswald, was the County Coroner, and Manchester was included in his jurisdiction. When he died he was succeeded by W. S. Rutter, who was at that time clerk to Oswald Milne. We shall hear more of him later. If the town were incorporated, it would appoint its own coroner, and fees from the most populous area would be diverted from the Milne circle.

Although Mr. Milne was too astute to appear openly in the controversy, he supplied the brains and legal knowledge which enabled the fight to be carried on for four years after the charter was actually granted. What brought the Churchwardens and Overseers into the arena—and they played the chief part after the charter was granted by refusing to make up the burgess lists, and then by refusing to collect the rates—was not merely personal affection for the prospective losses of their legal adviser, nor purely party feeling, although they were mostly Conservatives, but a fear for their own existence. The new Poor Law had not yet been put into operation in Manchester, and the Churchwardens and Overseers continued to work under the local Act of 1790, which left them practically a self-elected body, and free from central control.

There was some reason to believe that although the Poor Law Commissioners could not force the new Act on a township that worked under a local Act, it could force it if this township were joined with another. Therefore, advised Oswald Milne, as legal clerk to the Churchwardens, if "Manchester be united with another

township, however small, the system may be introduced by the Commissioners." The effect of incorporation would of course be to unite the township of Manchester with other townships, so that the risk was serious. The author of the petition against the charter was Richard Gould, who was senior Churchwarden in 1837, and his successor, George Clarke, carried on the fight heroically.

The reason why the Tories found allies amongst the Radicals was, as we have seen, their fear of the new Poor Law, the abolition of out-relief and the workhouse test. The Churchwardens and Overseers, whilst winning praise from the Poor Law Commissioners,¹ who reported in favour of a drastic reform of the Poor Law generally, seem to have acted with humanity—or at least to have shown an understanding of the position, when to have applied the workhouse test to the thousands of handloom weavers, unable to earn a subsistence wage, would have been impossible.

A furious campaign was carried on by Stephens and Oastler in Lancashire and Yorkshire against the new Poor Law. Stephens, the son of a Wesleyan minister, was educated at the Manchester Grammar School. He had been a minister at Ashton-under-Lyne from 1830 to 1834 and when he gave up his call "he continued to preach as a free lance, and a chapel was erected for him at Ashton, which remained his headquarters." R. J. Richardson, in Salford, and William Benbow, a Manchester reformer of the days of Peterloo, were also active in the anti-Poor Law agitation, and it was only natural that Elijah Dixon, of Newton Heath, and James Wroe, the two Radicals who opposed incorporation, should feel that the Whigs, who were responsible for the new Poor Law, could not be trusted with municipal reform. They did not believe that the franchise was a really democratic one, and in that they were right; and since the chief object of the reform was said to be a more efficient police force to deal mainly with "turnouts" and political demonstrations, it is not necessary to accept Cobden's view that they must have been the dupes of the Tories to understand why they joined with them in opposition to the measure. Neither of the parties then had any conception of the possibilities inherent in the new form of municipal government.

The interval between the Court Leet meeting in October 1837 which sealed the fate of the ancient form of manorial government,

¹ See below, p. 316.

and the first public meeting in support of incorporation in February 1838, was occupied by Neild and Cobden in making their plans and in organizing support amongst their business friends. Cobden wrote a pamphlet, *Incorporate Your Borough*, in which he first described the Municipal Corporations Act, and then, as a contrast, the proceedings of the Court Leet, a description from which we have already quoted.¹ He referred to the controversy then going on in Birmingham in connection with the petition for a charter, and pointed out that the opposition in Manchester would be of the same kind, namely, from Tories, who would appear in the guise of "tribunes of the poor," and probably cover the walls of the town with handbills "calling upon us to beware of a Bourbon police, Poor Law unions and bastilles." He dealt with the problem of the separate government of the out-townships, which were really dependent upon and interlocked with Manchester, and combined the whole argument with the Whig appeal for a democratic instead of a feudal government for a town like Manchester. Brilliant though the pamphlet was as a piece of polemical writing, it hardly gave a fair or comprehensive account of the existing government, for no mention was made of the Police Commissioners and their work or of the Surveyors of Highways or of the Churchwardens and Overseers. Neither did he lay any stress on the lack of co-ordination between the various bodies, nor the separation of their functions on irrational grounds, which seem to us to be the most outstanding features of the local government of that time. To the Whigs of that day the issue of popular control versus privilege appealed with far greater force than an argument based on efficiency, and Cobden in this pamphlet gave evidence of the power that made him later so successful a propagandist in the Anti-Corn Law campaign.

Meanwhile he had got in touch with Thomas Potter, who was a co-director of the Athenaeum, a Police Commissioner, and always ready to help in any progressive cause. A meeting was held on January 22nd to which six hundred people, known to be sympathetic, were invited by circular. Thomas Potter was in the chair, and a committee of fifty-eight was set up. George Wilson was made honorary secretary, and it is interesting to see that twenty-three of the members eventually became members of the Town Council, either of the first or of subsequent councils. Joseph Heron, who

¹ See above, pp. 41-44.

was to become Town Clerk, was also a member. This Committee drew up the petition asking the Borough Reeve to call a town's meeting.

Five thousand copies of Cobden's pamphlet were sold, so that it was hardly surprising that the requisition for a town's meeting was signed extensively in two days. The meeting was called for ten o'clock in the morning of February 9th. But the opposition had also been active, as Cobden prophesied. Large posters were displayed all over Manchester, and we can agree with the promoters of the meeting that they were both "violent and inflammatory." Here is a specimen:

WORKING MEN, BEWARE

The Whigs are at their dirty work again.
 We must have no middle class government, no Whig Corporations.
 No new Police. No Turtle-fed Aldermen. No Cotton-Lord Mayors.
 No Civic Banquets. No golden Mace, collars and orders.
 No wine cellars stored out of the *New Borough Rate* in addition to present Police Rate.
 The Whigs are not our Friends, their reform tends to establish a shopocracy to rush over and grind down the Poor.

REMEMBER!

Who gave the middle class a £10 Reform Bill?
 The Whigs.
 Who promised the people universal suffrage if they would help them to get the reform?
 The Incorporating Whigs.
 Who transported the Dorchester Labourers?
 The Humane Whigs.
 Who says the working classes are ignorant?
 The Wyse Whigs.
 Who in the case of the Dorchester men said education was a crime and ought to be punished?
 The Little Russell Whig.
 Who passed the Irish Coercion Bill?
 The O'Connell Whigs.
 Who employed Popay, the spy?
 The Melbourne Whigs.

Who refused the prayer of 100,000 working men in favour of the Dorchester Labourers?

The coward Melbourne, Whig Premier.

Who sent the London policemen to Cold Bath Fields Bradford, and Huddersfield as spies?

The Poor Law Whigs.

Who sent the London Police and Government reporter to Manchester to watch the working man's friends, and to write down treason?

The Manchester Whigs.

Who calls the Trade Unions a Board of Assassins?

The Guardian Whigs.

Who assists O'Connell to put down Trades Unions in England, Ireland and Scotland?

The Arch-eyed Whigs.

Who says the Ballot and the armed police will effectually keep down the working classes by raising up middle class government?

A Cob-ling Whig.

Who are the main supporters of these mean, dirty, truckling, shuffling, fake, treacherous, malthusian, Poor Law Whigs?

The Incorporate Your Borough Patriot.

WORKING MEN TO YOUR POSTS

BE AT

THE TOWN HALL AT HALF-PAST NINE PRECISELY.

HERE IS UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

SHOW THAT YOU ARE READY TO EXERCISE YOUR FREEDOM, AND

VOTE AGAINST INCORPORATION

And another:

TREACHERY!

TREACHERY!!

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

The "Shabby," dishonest Whigs are again at their dirty work, trying with all manner of lies to gull you into believing that the Humbug Corporation Bill, the Whig "Boon" will do good to you all.

Now every man who has read this bill knows that this "great boon" to the People, confers as odious, nay more odious privileges on the wealthier classes, than the present Police Act, for by this "Liberal"

Corporation Act, those who are assessed at £100 have Ten times the power in governing the Town which they have, who are assessed at £10.

Men of Manchester, what is this but making over the Poor to the Tender mercies of the Rich, and those too the pretended Liberals, the Devilish Whigs!

MEN OF THE BOROUGH.

BE UP AND STIRRING BETIMES ON FRIDAY MORNING BY TEN O'CLOCK

BE AT

MANCHESTER TOWN HALL.

REMEMBER THE PENALTIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE ARE

WHIG MISRULE,

NEW AND OPPRESSIVE TAXES,

A BOURBON POLICE

AND THE PREMIUM FOR

BASTARD-BEGOTTING, INFERNAL NEW POOR LAW.

Although steps had been taken to prevent non-ratepayers from attending the meeting, some of the audience of two thousand, which overflowed the large room in the old Town Hall, did come under this description. The Borough Reeve,¹ supported by the two Constables,² took the chair. Cobden opened the proceedings with a speech that summarized his pamphlet *Incorporate Your Borough*. He spoke entirely of the Court Leet and the antiquated and unsuitable character of such feudal government, and contrasted it with a Town Council democratically elected and having the power to levy the rates. He appealed to the desire for economy by his plea "give your Town Clerk a salary, don't let him have fees to the amount of six, eight or ten thousand pounds a year. Give him a sufficient salary and you will save another lawyer's office, that I need not name, £3,000 a year by the appointment of Town Clerk." No one present at the meeting could miss the reference to Oswald Milne. He appealed to the dissenters by stating, not quite correctly, that the "Test Act" is virtually existing in all its force in Manchester, for William Neild was a Quaker and had been

¹ John Brown.

² John Ferguson and David Price.

Constable, and he, Thomas Potter, and many other dissenters were Police Commissioners. Some dissenters were also magistrates. He attacked those in the out-townships who were opposing incorporation by pointing out the growing connection between their interests and those of Manchester.

It was an excellent fighting speech, and the resolution was seconded by C. J. S. Walker, a well-known Manchester Liberal. The opposition came mainly from the Radical, James Wroe, who made a violent personal attack on Cobden, in spite of protests from the chair, and by Edward Nightingale, who accused the Whigs of trying to "crush the rising liberties of Manchester, to commit robbery by taxation and to coerce and keep down the people."

The meeting had lasted for four hours when the chairman put the hostile amendment to the vote. About one-third voted for it, and the original motion was then carried by a large majority. The appointment of a committee to carry the resolution into effect was then moved by Alexander Kay, a solicitor, who was later Mayor for two years, and seconded by W. Romaine Callender, who became one of the first aldermen.

III

The next step was to draw up a statement of the case for incorporation for submission to the Privy Council. This was prepared by William Neild. He gave figures to show the growth of Manchester and the out-townships, and he pointed out the importance of the area as the centre of a large manufacturing district. He then set out the now familiar arguments of the inadequacy of the Court Leet for modern conditions, the inefficiency of the police system with its nine independent and unconnected bodies of police in the area.

The counter petition, drawn up by Richard Gould, admitted that some change in the government of the town was desirable, but held there was no need for so big a change as that proposed. The difficulty of finding suitable people to fill the office of Borough Reeve and Constables could be met by extending the obligation to serve to those who occupied property in the township instead of

making residence necessary. Or, if it was desirable to have popular election for these offices, he suggested that a list of names might be annually proposed by the Police Commissioners and laid before the Court Leet—which would, incidentally, be very indirect popular election—or, becoming bolder, he suggested that Parliament might actually empower the Police Commissioners to elect the Borough Reeve, unless “that should be considered an unjust interference with the right of the Lord of the Manor.” He said that the separate governments in the out-townships made for healthy rivalry in economical and judicious management, and brought in to the government many people who would be unable to serve in a wider field. The fact that Manchester had grown to such a size under the existing form of government proved that no fundamental alteration was necessary.

Once the necessity for some change was admitted, the case for patching up the Court Leet and fitting it on to the Police Commissioners, was a feeble one, and was probably inspired not only by a dislike of radical change, but by a desire to keep power in the hands of Oswald Milne. But this counter petition made one statement which was never referred to or answered by the pro-charter party. It pointed out that, under the local Acts, the Police Commissioners had the power to provide and pay day as well as night police. Why this power was never used, or why in the early discussions on reform in 1836 William Neild never put this proposal before the gatherings of business men, who as we have seen were mainly interested in the efficiency of the existing police arrangements, is not known.

On March 10th, just a month after the Town Hall meeting, Neild and Cobden deposited at the Privy Council office a petition with 11,780 signatures. The opposition went one better with a petition of 32,000 names.

Some of the methods adopted by the anti-charter party had been suspected before the actual number of signatures was announced, and the pro-charter party was not long in suggesting, not only in Manchester but to the Privy Council, that not all those names were genuine.

The Privy Council met on May 1st to consider the petitions. Lord Lansdowne, Lord Holland, Lord John Russell, Lord Howick and Mr. Poulett Thomson, one of the Manchester M.P.s and Presi-

dent of the Board of Trade, were present. Deputations from both sides were received separately. According to the report in the *Manchester Chronicle*, the Tory paper, the opponents of the charter were asked about the validity of the signatures, and whether they would be prepared to justify them if the Privy Council sent down Commissioners to investigate. Some discussion also took place on the point that was to prove of vital importance in the subsequent fight.

Section 141 of the Municipal Corporations Act had given power to the inhabitant householders of any town or borough in England and Wales to petition for a charter of incorporation. The section said nothing about the necessity for a *majority* of the inhabitants to be in favour of the charter. The anti-incorporators asked the Privy Council if they would be guided in their decision by the opinion of the majority of the householders, and whether the amount of assessment would be taken into consideration? They received the impression that "if it can be shown that the majority of householders petitioning are against incorporation, the borough will not be incorporated," but some who were present at the interview did not feel so sure.

Sir Frederick Pollock gave his legal opinion to the anti-incorporators that a charter could not be forced upon a town against the wishes of the majority. The same question had arisen in the case of Birmingham. Petitions and counter-petitions in this case also made the task of the Privy Council difficult. In the House of Lords, when the question of the charter for Birmingham was raised, Lord Lansdowne, Lord President of the Council, was reported to have said that the Privy Council had come to the conclusion that the applications for charters ought to be signed by a majority of the ratepayers, being inhabitant householders of the town in question. He was not prepared, however, to say that he would always refuse a charter of incorporation in cases where the majority of ratepayers did not represent the larger amount of assessment.

Captain Jebb and Mr. Gordon, the former an officer of the Royal Engineers, were sent by the Privy Council to Manchester at the end of May to make inquiries under three heads.

They were to find out the actual numbers and the amount of assessment of the ratepayers that had signed both petitions; they were to inquire into the allegations that had been made that many

of the signatures against the charter had been obtained fraudulently; and finally they were to inquire into the state of local government, the expense attending it, and whether there would be likely to be an increase or diminution if a municipal council were granted.

From the series of reports which Captain Jebb submitted to the Privy Council, we see the inside of the curious episode, from which eventually our Town Council emerged.

The Commissioners had no easy task. They were confronted with a petition in favour of incorporation of 11,780 names, whereas there were 32,000 against. Only the latter petition had affixed the amount of assessment against the names. The pro-charter party had openly accused the antis of fraud in obtaining signatures. Captain Jebb summoned the two parties to the Town Hall, and got their consent to his proposed method of checking the names on each petition.

He took first the names from the townships of Manchester and Ardwick. Of those in favour, the Commissioners were able to identify 64 per cent. Of those against, they were only able to identify 22 per cent.

The Commissioners therefore felt that in this large discrepancy of 21,000 names lay grounds for justifiable suspicion, for it was too large to be accounted for by change of residence, copying mistakes, etc. They also found whole streets filled up in the same writing. At this stage a dramatic confession was made by two canvassers, Lanergan and Finney. They had been hired by James Wroe, the Radical, on behalf of the anti-charter party, to collect signatures at the rate of three shillings and sixpence a day. But the Conservative Association had engaged others at three shillings a day, with a commission of three shillings on every sheet of fifty-two names. When Lanergan and Finney discovered this they were naturally indignant, and when the suggestion of a similar arrangement in their case was refused, they came to the pro-charter committee and exposed the whole business. They confessed that out of the 2,000 signatures that they had collected, only 500 were genuine.

The Commissioners were now faced with the problem of trying to find out what proportion of the anti-charter signatures had been actually signed by the people themselves. As it was impossible to check the lot, Captain Jebb and his fellow Com-

missioner carried out a plan of sampling. They took a few streets and called at the addresses given. Out of 60 names, they found only 10 who admitted having signed. As very few of these names appeared in Lanergan's and Finney's lists, they were led to the conclusion they were not the only forgers. Captain Jebb felt justified in excluding the doubtful 20,000.

A counter accusation of forgery against the pro-charter party had been made by the antis when they realized that their cause had been severely damaged by Lanergan's and Finney's confessions. Captain Jebb investigated this charge with strict impartiality. He took declarations from three men who had been employed by the pro-charter committee to collect names in some of the out-townships. They said that their instructions were to get names of inhabitant householders or ratepayers, but no females. Occasionally they wrote on request the names of those who wished to sign but who could not write. He also sent up to the Privy Council a statement signed by William Neild, Thomas Potter, Richard Cobden and fifty other well-known people, saying that they had collected signatures voluntarily and gratuitously, and only from inhabitant householders or ratepayers. If any other signatures appeared, they were inserted without their knowledge or consent.

Two witnesses to support the charge were, with difficulty, produced at the Town Hall by the antis, but one fled from the room before he had answered a single question, and the other "recanted when he was confronted with the man whom he had accused." Captain Jebb wrote to the Privy Council that he was left with the impression "that the petition in favour of a charter is unimpeachable."

In his final decision he relied on the names that had been identified by comparison with the rate books. They were: for the Charter 5,455 with an assessment of £150,760; against the Charter 6,096 with an assessment of £113,603. This gave a balance of 641 names against, but a balance of £37,157 assessment in favour. However, the Municipal Corporations Act had said nothing about assessment, so the unfortunate Commissioner had to do his best with the figures.

The Privy Council had also instructed him to inquire about the local government of Manchester, and the expense involved. He met people of all parties whilst he was in Manchester, and he also

consulted Colonel Wemyss, the Adjutant in command of the Regulars in that district. From him came confirmation of what Mr. Neild and the leading business men told him about the inefficiency of the police forces. Even if he had not been sent by a Whig Government, the authors of the Municipal Corporations Act, he would, like any unprejudiced observer, realize that the existing local institutions of Manchester were obsolete, and that a single government for the area that had become Manchester, based on a uniform franchise, was an urgent necessity. He realized, however, that because of the bitterness of the local party struggle, he must give the Privy Council strong grounds on which to base their decision.

How was he not only to get rid of six hundred odd votes against, but to produce a majority for the charter? Although the Act said nothing about the necessity for an actual majority of all the "inhabitant householders," Captain Jebb probably felt that it would be difficult for the Privy Council to grant the charter unless it could be shown that there was an actual majority of those voting in favour of it.

He therefore returned to his contemplation of the six thousand "good" names on the anti-petition. He found that "females" had been included in the anti-petition, but not in the pro-charter petition, because the promoters of the latter were "under the impression that they would not have weight with your lordships." Tempting though it is to consider what light this remark throws on the attitude of Whigs to women, we must assume that as "females" were not municipal voters until many years later, the promoters had been concerned to get weight and not mere numbers for their petition, whereas the Tories were merely anxious for numbers, and thought that for this purpose only a woman should count equal to a man. However, we can agree that Captain Jebb was justified in excluding the 458 females, which brought the majority against down to 183. What more could he do, being an honourable man? He was also an ingenious one. He found that the anti-charter party had included in their signatures many small ratepayers, those assessed at less than £4 10s. None of these were apparently on the pro-charter petition, which, as we have seen, aimed, both by the kind of signatures and by the assessment of those signing, at support of their contention that

the charter was demanded by business men and leading shopkeepers. The anti party would have found it easy to collect signatures of small ratepayers, both because a Tory landlord would have used his influence with his tenants, and because, as the Radicals were co-operating, they would naturally have collected signatures from working men. But Captain Jebb decided to deduct all these, and he justified it on the following grounds. He explained that under the local Police Act assessments under £4 10s. were exempt from the Police Rate, but that if brought under the Municipal Corporations Act they would be liable for the rate for "watching," and that this doubtless had weight with the signatories. "It may further be observed that the smaller class of ratepayer or inhabitant householders, though they have an equal right with others to petition on any subject affecting their interests, are that class of persons who may possibly feel better satisfied with a defective police than an efficient one; and that the large proprietors who really are beneficially interested in good order and protection of property do not stand on the same ground, nor could they under such circumstances carry any measure by number, however desirable it might be for themselves and the community at large." Democracy in practice! These people do not want to pay increased rates, they probably prefer an inefficient police force, and in any case, if they are to be allowed to count, the "large proprietors," whose interests are really identical with those of the "community at large," will never be able to carry out these measures.

The sum could now be completed. The deduction of the small ratepayers from the anti-charter petition gave a respectable majority of 752 signatures, and an assessment of £45,955 in favour of the charter.

We have no doubt that Captain Jebb was sincere in his view of the small ratepayers even if he had not been faced with an almost impossible arithmetical problem, but we are not surprised that Greville, Clerk to the Privy Council, should have been a little doubtful about the effect of his procedure upon the members of the Privy Council, all Whigs and supposedly democrats. At any rate he took no risks. Captain Jebb's report had to be copied and circulated to members of the sub-committee of the Privy Council that dealt with petitions for charters. Against the part justifying

the deduction of the small ratepayers, Greville pencilled in the margin "Leave Out," so their Lordships, fortunately for their peace of mind, never knew the process by which an adverse majority of 641 was turned into a pro-charter majority of 752, and we are left marvelling at the ingenuity, not of a modern civil servant, but of a Captain of the Royal Engineers, a hundred years ago. Looking back to-day, there is nobody in Manchester, whatever his politics, who will blame Captain Jebb for allowing the end to justify his means.

Even Captain Jebb, however, could not make the majority of 752 a majority of *all* the inhabitant householders. There was no way of calculating these exactly, but a rough estimate could be made from the number of assessments. There were over 52,000 of these in Manchester, Ardwick, Chorlton, Hulme and Cheetham. If, then, the whole of the anti-charter signatures—32,000—had been genuine, that party could have shown that more than half the total of inhabitant householders had petitioned against a charter. It was this point that caused trouble to the new Council and expensive litigation during the next four years.

There was a meeting of the Committee of the Privy Council on August 14th. Captain Jebb's reports were considered and "Their Lordships agreed to report as their opinions to Her Majesty that it might be advisable for her Majesty to grant the Charter prayed for." Mr. Poulett Thomson was present, and it was not surprising that he felt that he could unofficially inform the pro-charter committee that the grant was going through. The *Morning Chronicle* commented on the rumour in the following terms (August 18, 1838):

"We have from the first anticipated some trickery in the matter, and we are not disappointed. The indecent haste with which the question has been decided, the indecent part which the representative of the Manchester Whigs has taken part in it—and the recklessness with which the Whig Party Council have thrown aside the petition of the majority of the householders, who expressed their opinions upon it—are all in keeping with the mode in which the original memorial was got up and supported."

But a hitch occurred. Perhaps a suspicion of how Captain Jebb had produced a majority was roused, or protests against his assumption that twenty thousand signatures were forgeries seemed to the Lord Chancellor, who had to affix his seal to the charter, too sweep-

ing. We find, therefore, that Captain Jebb was sent down to Manchester again on September 8th to investigate further the question of forgeries. A memorandum sent to him from Greville says that the Privy Council had to decide "whether, in view of the section of the Act, the case of the petitioners for the charter had been established by a numerical superiority." So back came Captain Jebb on what he must have known was a hopeless quest. The anti-charter party were full of glee and high in hope, and the pro-charter committee correspondingly depressed. They were so sure that the matter was successfully concluded that they had already formed an election committee in preparation for the November elections. William Neild wrote a letter to the Lord President of the Council protesting against re-opening the inquiry. He said that his committee had felt that mere numbers of signatures were not necessary but that the petition should be "respectable," by which he obviously meant signed by men of standing and substance in the town. This attitude, common to the Whigs, explains how wide was the gulf between them and the Chartists, who really believed that democracy meant the political equality of man. Neild went on to point out that his committee had already spent much money and valuable time during the last eight months on this business, and that he felt that the Privy Council had treated the antis with too much consideration. However, when Captain Jebb applied to him for help in this further investigation, he agreed to give it.

With three confidential assistants, Captain Jebb went through some of the names and himself visited specimen streets, but on September 17th he wrote to the Privy Council to say that he did not think more work would be much good. He makes another calculation and contrives to get a majority of 390 for the charter. He adds that as it is quite impossible to separate the genuine from the forged signatures, he cannot give any definite majority as a certain figure, but that the Privy Council must bear in mind the different character of the two petitions and the circumstances connected with them.

He was allowed to return to London, and Lord Cottenham, the Lord Chancellor, in a letter to Greville, said that he understood that the numbers against had now been reduced below those for. "Under these circumstances, I think that the object of the further investigation has been attained by establishing the fact of a majority

having petitioned in favour of the charter . . . and I, therefore, think that the inquiry may properly be closed, and as the ground upon which I thought further inquiry necessary before the charter was completed will thus have been removed, I see no existing objection to the charter being sealed." The charter was finally sent to Manchester on October 23rd.

Captain Jebb's name has never been associated with those of William Neild, Thomas Potter, Richard Cobden, George Wilson and Alexander Kay as responsible for the birth of modern municipal government in our city. He was, after all, merely a civil servant making inquiries for his masters. But he not only performed the delicate task of investigating charges of forgery against both sides, but used his judgment to sum up the position. In coming to the conclusion that a completely new form of local government was necessary, he did not rely only upon the opinions of the Whigs, but was obviously most influenced by a fellow officer, Colonel Wemyss, whose views of the respective functions of the military and the police in civil disturbances were enlightened and democratic. Having come to his conclusion, the details of actual numbers in the opposing petitions must have seemed to him irrelevant. Still, as an arithmetical majority was demanded by the Privy Council, he was quite prepared to provide it. Whether he added or subtracted females, forgeries or small ratepayers, he could surely contrive to produce a majority, although he would not stand by the actual figures. For on that side he was convinced lay reason, justice, the good of the "respectable" inhabitants, and therefore, if the working classes would only realize it, the real good of the community. Captain Jebb should not be forgotten in the centenary celebrations. He is a striking example of the civil servant who interprets the spirit rather than the letter of official instructions.

During all the excitement about the petitions little attention seems to have been paid to the area of the proposed municipality. It was originally assumed that this would be the same as that of the parliamentary borough which had been formed in 1832. There is no trace of any suggestion at this time that Salford might be joined with Manchester. Yet many of the arguments that were used to bring Chorlton-on-Medlock, Hulme, Ardwick and Cheetham into the boundaries of the new municipality would have applied with equal force to Salford. Perhaps the fact that it was at this time a

separate parliamentary borough, and that there was no precedent for uniting in one municipality that which Parliament had made separate, was considered conclusive. Or, it may be, that memories went back to the history of the union of the two under one body of Police Commissioners in 1765. The system had not been a success, and as we saw the two townships had separated their administration in fact several years before it was separated by law.¹ Whatever the reason, it seems unfortunate that the union was not made in 1838 before Salford had been made a municipal borough.²

One of Captain Jebb's tasks was to recommend the boundary of the new municipality. He found that some of the out-townships, namely, Newton Heath, Harpurhey, Bradford, Beswick, had petitioned unanimously against incorporation with Manchester.

Newton Heath was at this date mainly agricultural, containing about 1,500 acres of cultivated land and forty-five farms. There were not more than six mills and factories, five streets, and nine hundred householders; and the petition stated that they did not consider incorporation "to be worth the sacrifice to be made in the burdens to be imposed on them without any return of benefit applicable to a purely agricultural district."

The other reason was that the Manor of Newton belonged to the Wardens and Fellows of the Collegiate Church, and they were also trustees for some land belonging to the public. They certainly would not want to pay higher rates.

We know that Elijah Dixon stated at a meeting in Manchester that he slept as soundly in Newton, which was neither watched nor lighted, as he did in Manchester. Harpurhey, Beswick and Bradford were also country townships of the same kind, and Captain Jebb came to the conclusion that there were no local circumstances which made it of importance to the municipal government of Manchester that these townships should form part of the new borough. His opinion was confirmed by Sir J. Heron, the Town Clerk, thirty years later, when he gave evidence before the Select Committee on Boundaries for Boroughs in 1868. He pointed out that, even at that date, more than half the area of the parliamentary borough was still undeveloped, and practically the whole of that kind of land was in Newton Heath, Bradford, Beswick and Harpurhey. "How these got into the parliamentary borough it is not for me to

¹ In 1828. 9 Geo. IV, c. 117.

² In 1844.

understand. I have no idea, but that there is very little community of interest was proved by the fact that not very long after the parliamentary borough was formed, the municipal boundaries had to be settled and, as might be expected, these districts were excluded. There was no community of interest between them, no reason why they should be taxed for the same purpose and to the same extent."

Captain Jebb thought, however, that Cheetham should come into the borough, with Chorlton-on-Medlock and Ardwick, as they were all closely identified with Manchester. Cheetham was a considerable residential area at this time. Somehow or other a small piece of Beswick, extra parochial, as it was called, got slipped in with Ardwick, and when the charter was received it was found to include the townships of Manchester, Cheetham, Hulme, Ardwick, Chorlton and Beswick. It covered an area of 4,293 acres, a population of 242,675, and a rateable value of £780,535.

Captain Jebb's last task, and much the easiest, was to divide the future borough into wards. The result of his allocation was nine wards for the township of Manchester, namely New Cross, St. Michael's, Collegiate Church, St. Clement's, Exchange, Oxford, St. James, St. John's, and St. Ann's; two for Chorlton—All Saints and St. Luke's; two for Hulme—St. George's and Medlock Street; and one each for Ardwick and Cheetham. These fifteen wards were to return three councillors each, with the exception of New Cross, which was to return six, as a concession to its larger population. Sixteen aldermen brought the number of the new Council to sixty-four.

IV

The arrival of the charter in Manchester did not, however, end the controversy, although from this time the Radicals gradually dropped out, leaving the Tories to carry on the fight alone. When the opponents realized that not all their efforts could prevent the grant of the charter, they adopted different tactics. They took up the position that, as the charter had been granted in opposition to the wishes of a majority of inhabitant householders, it was illegal, and they determined to treat it as such, and in due course to test its

validity in the Law Courts. The Overseers and Churchwardens, led by Richard Gould and George Clarke, refused to take any part in the preparation of the list of municipal electors or in the elections which were to be held on December 14th, and for several years they continued their policy of obstruction, which not only paralyzed the government of the town but involved the citizens in great expense.

The annual election of Police Commissioners took place in October just after the arrival of the charter, and the first battle was fought there. Each side made an effort to capture the seats. If a pro-charter majority were secured, there would be no difficulty about handing over their powers to the Town Council once it was elected.¹ The result of the elections was a victory for the opposition, the Tory-Radical combination, which meant that the Police Commissioners refused the use of the Town Hall, which was their property, even for the revision of the list of municipal voters.

The charter had named David Price, an ex-Constable, as the person to make out the list of burgesses for the first election and Mr. Rushton,² a barrister, to revise it.

The battle opened with the refusal of the Overseers to produce the rate books, and how Mr. Price made out the list is not known.

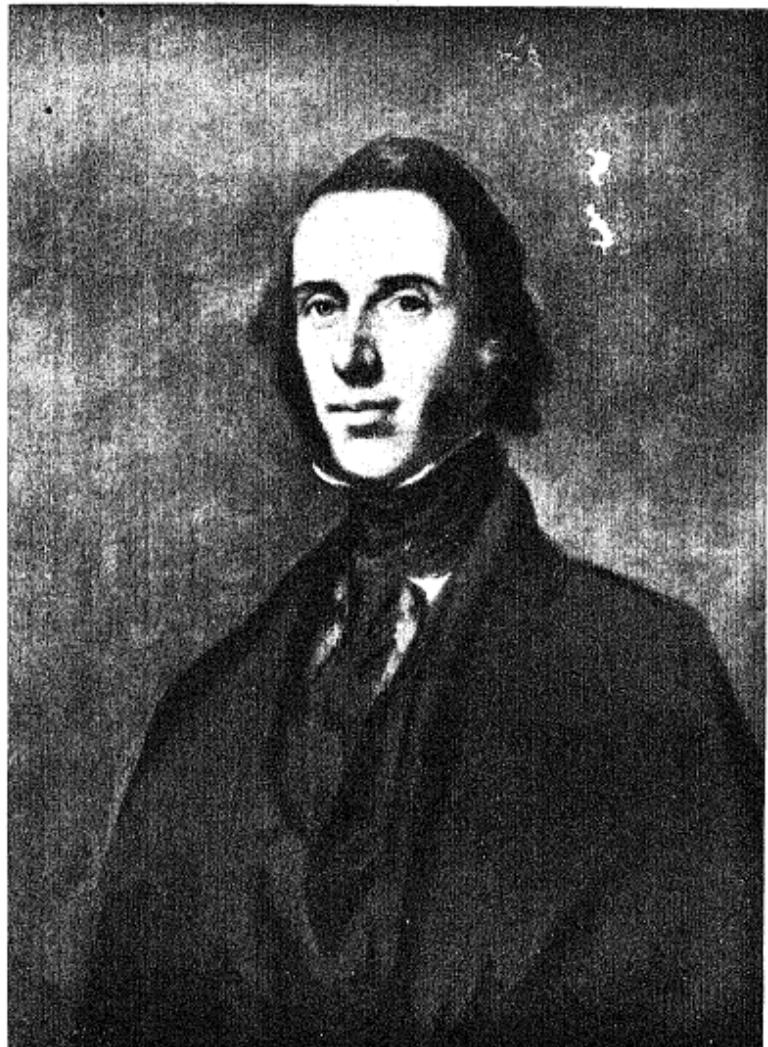
When Edward Rushton came to revise the list, not only did the Police Commissioners refuse him a room in the Town Hall, but the Borough Reeve³ and the Constables⁴ also refused him a room in the Manor Court office on the grounds that, being public functionaries, they should be strictly impartial. He was finally forced to hold the Revision Court in the Exchange dining-room. When the Court opened, the Overseers of the townships of Ardwick, Cheetham and Hulme appeared with their books, but as those for Manchester and Chorlton-on-Medlock refused to come, he decided to take any other evidence that could be obtained from these townships. "An old Corporation Commissioner is not to be frightened by Tory protests," he wrote.

¹ The Municipal Corporations Act had given power to councils to take over the powers and property of the various bodies of Police and Improvement Commissioners, but did not make transfer compulsory, as Lord Brougham had proposed in his Bill.

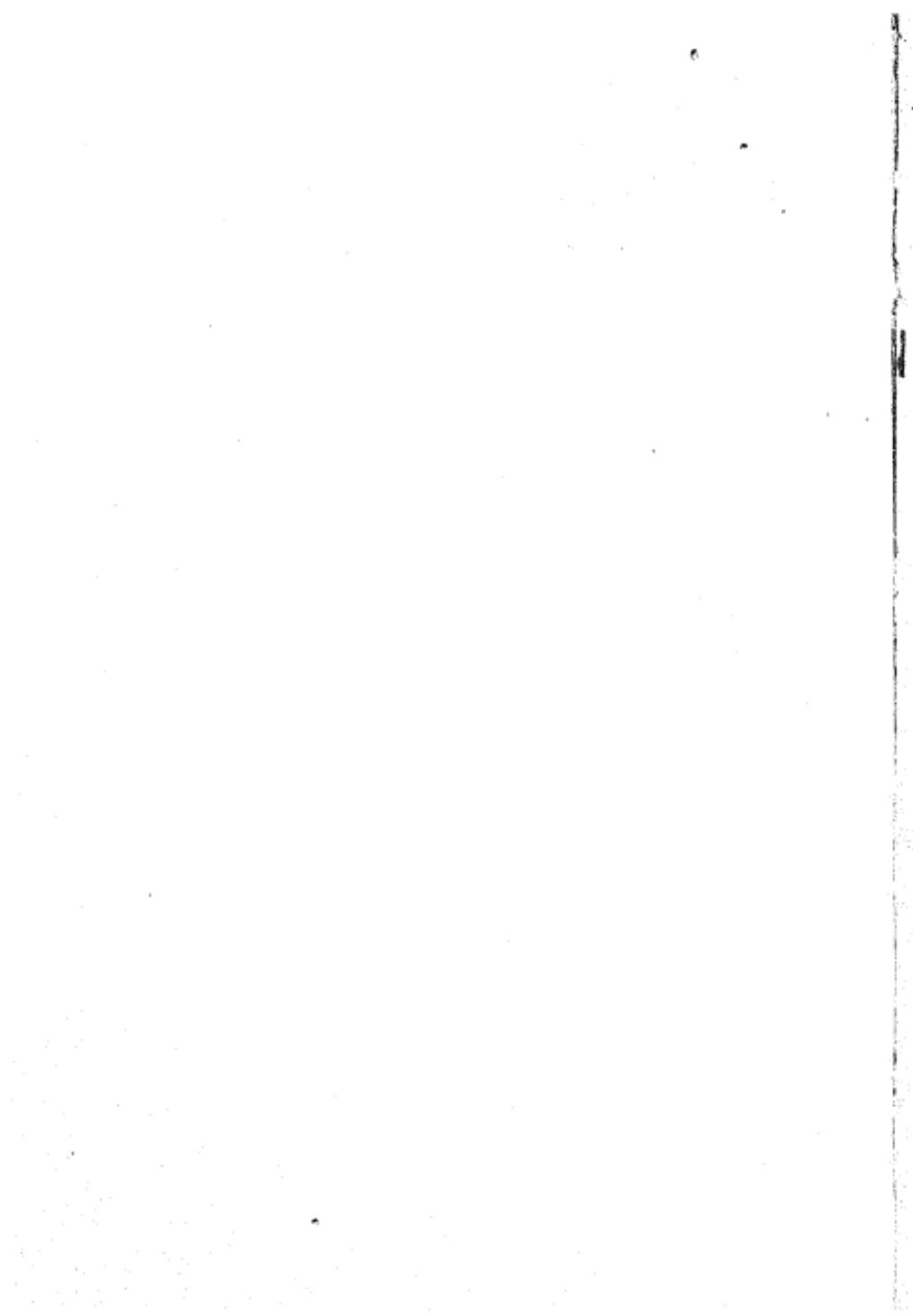
² Edward Rushton had been one of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations, and had helped to draw up the Report and the Bill.

³ Thomas Evans.

⁴ George Wood and John Woollam.



I. SIR JOSEPH HERON
Town Clerk of Manchester 1838-1889
From a portrait in the Town Hall



The list as finally issued consisted of 9,000 names, nearly 2,000 less than the Parliamentary list for the same year, and yet the municipal franchise was supposed to be on a wider basis than the Parliamentary, which was limited to the £10 householder.¹ There is no reason to believe that there was any justification for the *Morning Chronicle's* accusation that the list was manufactured by the Whigs or that "when two parties were known to be of different politics, the name of the Whig was inserted, while that of the Conservative was left out." Under the circumstances the first list was bound to be even more inaccurate than the Parliamentary lists and, as the Tories boycotted all the proceedings and did not even make claims, it is not surprising that many of them were not included.

The first election took place on December 14th. The official Tories, who pursued their policy of boycotting anything to do with the election, had some difficulty in preventing one of their members from contesting St. Ann's Ward, but eventually there was no opposition. Even so over 3,000 votes were cast, so that the first Council could certainly claim to have the enthusiastic support of one-third of the electorate. No one but an enthusiast would, in the absence of convenient polling booths and in full publicity—for the ballot was not introduced until 1872—take the trouble of casting a vote for an unopposed candidate.

The first Council met on December 16th at 10.30 a.m. in the York Hotel, next door to the Town Hall in King Street. The first business was the election of Mayor; Mr. Thomas Potter² was elected on the motion of Alderman Neild, and Mr. Joseph Heron³ was appointed Town Clerk, although there were other nominations. The aldermen were then elected, some from within the Council and some from outside, and the first committee was appointed.

The new Council had several years of bitter opposition still to face. The anti-charter party, inspired and secretly led by Oswald Milne, was by no means beaten, and from December 1838 until August 1842 it waged a guerrilla warfare which harassed the Council in its work, involved it in lawsuits, wasted thousands of pounds of the ratepayers' money, necessitated Government

¹ The question of the municipal franchise is fully discussed in Appendix I.

² He was knighted in 1840.

³ He was knighted in 1869.

control of the police for three years, and presented a far from dignified picture of local politics.

Sir Charles Shaw, who was sent by the Government to take control of the police forces during the controversy, found on his arrival in Manchester in September 1839, "local party animosity carried to an incredible height, the feelings of hatred to each other being so rabid as not even to be exceeded in the civil commotions of Portugal and Spain. . . . In Manchester public good was almost forgotten."

Oswald Milne, the successful pluralist, whose firm for over forty years had managed to secure all the lucrative legal business of the various public bodies that governed the rapidly growing town, was not going to surrender what he considered his rights to a popularly elected council, which had appointed a young man of twenty-nine as its Town Clerk and legal adviser.

He was a strong Tory and a churchman, and most of the leading business men of Manchester at this date were Whigs and Non-conformists, but what had roused their strong personal antipathy to him was the fact—widely believed, if never actually proved—that it was he, as Clerk to the magistrates, who had advised them to order the yeomanry to charge the crowd at Peterloo. Although that had happened nearly twenty years before, Oswald Milne's action from the beginning of the fight for the charter showed that he was still the embodiment of reaction, the advocate of vested interests against those of the community.

The first serious controversy arose over the appointment of coroner, and the validity of the charter was finally settled by the courts on this issue. The County Coroner, Mr. Rutter, also held the post of Treasurer to the County Magistrates, and was a close ally of Oswald Milne, who was the Magistrates' Clerk. Before incorporation Manchester and the out-townships were, as we have seen, within the jurisdiction of the county. Incorporation of the borough, followed by the grant of Quarter Sessions in April 1839, involved the appointment of a Borough Coroner, which meant that inquests in the town would no longer be held by the County Coroner. Mr. Rutter, advised by Oswald Milne, fought to retain all the inquests on the ground that the charter was invalid, and that therefore Manchester was still within the county. When the Borough Coroner, Chapman, was notified of his first inquest, the Constables

refused to call a jury for him. He therefore summoned one himself, and went to the Infirmary, where he found that Rutter had been before him, held his inquest, and ordered the coffin to be screwed down. Chapman promptly had the coffin unscrewed, and held another inquest. Rutter then served him with a writ for alleged invasion of his office. This raised the whole question of the validity of the charter.¹ The case went from the Liverpool Assizes, where a verdict was given for the Council, to the Court of Exchequer, where, after a delay of two years, the verdict was confirmed by a majority. An appeal to the House of Lords was threatened, and it was not until 1842 when this had been withdrawn that an Act of Parliament² was passed confirming the charter.

The sight of rival coroners fighting for their fees over the dead and holding double inquests over the same body was the most gruesome side of the conflict, but there were others of more moment to the ordinary citizen.

One of the chief reasons put forward for the reform of the municipal government was, as we saw, the necessity for an efficient police force under a popularly elected body. When the Act was put in force—as in Manchester by the grant of the charter—the Town Council became the police authority in the borough, with power to levy the Police Rate, and so superseded the Constables who were in control of the day police, and the Police Commissioners of the various townships in so far as they were in control of the night police. One of the first acts of the Town Council was to appoint a Watch Committee, which by June 1839 had formed a police force to act by day and by night over the area of the Borough. Hulme, Chorlton-on-Medlock and Ardwick disbanded their separate forces, but the township of Manchester refused to do so. The Constables of the Court Leet kept their scanty and

¹ *Rutter v. Chapman* was the first case in which the validity of charters granted under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 had been questioned, and as the charters for Birmingham and Bolton, which had been attacked on the same grounds as that for Manchester, were also confirmed by it, it was recognized to be of great importance. L. C. J. Denman, who dissociated from the majority decision, referred to "this great case so important to the future administration of civil and criminal justice over one of the most populous districts of England, the jurisdiction to which it is to belong, the authority by which it is to be taxed, and which case must give the rules for the future government of numerous other districts of mainly equal importance."

² The Borough Charters Confirmation Act, 5 & 6 Vic., c. 111.

inefficient force of day police and continued, quite illegally, to pay their wages from the Poor Rate. The Police Commissioners, with a hostile majority and with Oswald Milne as their Law Clerk, kept their separate night force and continued, also illegally, to raise the Police Rate that ought now to have been superseded by the borough Police Rate so far as the payment of the police was concerned. The lock-ups and premises used as watch-houses, the arms and accoutrements were not surrendered. The Council instituted proceedings against the Constables and Police Commissioners; fines inflicted by the magistrates were not paid and distress warrants were issued. In some cases the tables were turned by actions being instituted against the borough Justices for signing distress warrants.

The Churchwardens and Overseers, whose legal adviser was Oswald Milne, now entered the arena, and refused to levy the Borough Rate. This move was, however, countered by the guarantee of £29,000 given by seventy-four members of the Council and other citizens, in sums varying from the £1,000 of Sir Thomas Potter, John Brooks and Robert Philips to the £50 of less wealthy but equally enthusiastic supporters. Against this bond the Bank of Manchester made advances for the expenses of the Corporation until the rates could be levied.

Oswald Milne and his friends were so anxious to embarrass the Council that they had no hesitation in promoting local turmoil at a period when it was particularly important that the forces of law and order should be strong and under wise leadership. The years from 1839 to the middle forties were years of bad trade, financial crises and high food prices. The Chartists were gaining ground, there was a big meeting on Kersal Moor in 1839, and fear of disorders and riots.

The Government had to act and as, until the validity of the charter was established, nothing could be done locally to end the deadlock, Lord John Russell, the Home Secretary, put through an Act for putting the police in Manchester, Birmingham and Bolton, where opposition to the charters had taken the same course, under Commissioners for two years.¹ Sir Charles Shaw was appointed for Manchester, and given power, by precept signed by the Home Secretary, to call upon the Overseers for a strictly limited amount of money which was to be paid out of the Poor Rate.

¹ When this Act expired in 1841, it was extended for one more year.

When Sir Charles Shaw arrived in Manchester he found three police forces in existence: the day police under the Constables, the night police under the Police Commissioners, and the new borough police force which had been appointed by the Watch Committee of the Council. These three bodies, comprising six hundred constables, were under no general control and possessed "no continuity of information or any unity of action." The existing forces cost £40,000, but Sir Charles Shaw was limited to £16,500, which was only enough for 200 constables. These he recruited from the existing forces in order to placate all parties, but he was doubtful of the loyalty of some of those that he took on. Two hundred constables, however, were obviously inadequate. Sir Charles calculated that four hundred was the requisite number, and although he soon increased his force to three hundred, he was not able to employ more because of the financial limit. His enemies made much of this decrease in the forces.

As soon as the validity of the charter was established, the force was handed back to the Town Council.¹ Although only a few weeks before there had been riots and Chartist demonstrations, both the Government and Sir Charles Shaw were anxious to vest the control in the hands of the civil authority as soon as possible.

At the same time that Oswald Milne's friends had been doing their best to make the maintenance of law and order impossible, they were challenging the Council on the situation that had arisen by the grant of a separate Commission of the Peace to the borough. Hitherto,² Manchester had been under the county magistrates, some of whom acted for the Division of Manchester and sat at the New Bailey Court House in Salford. Oswald Milne, who knew that he would have no chance of being appointed Clerk to the Borough Magistrates, saw by far the largest part of his fees disappearing if the populous and lucrative Division of Manchester were wrested from the county.

The county magistrates, inspired by their Clerk, refused to give way. The New Bailey Prison was in Salford under the control of the county magistrates, and although an agreement had been made and acted upon for five months, by which prisoners committed by the borough magistrates had been admitted to the New Bailey, a legal point was raised by Richard Gould and judgment given in

¹ October 1842.

² See above, p. 60.

his favour. So long as that opinion was not reversed, only prisoners committed by borough magistrates who happened also to be county magistrates were admitted to the gaol. This dispute was, as we shall see, carried to Parliament, but as even that body proved incapable of settling it, nothing could be done until the Act was passed which established the validity of the charter.

There was still another front upon which the war could be waged, and that was the important one of rates.

As we have seen, the Overseers who levied the rates were appointed by the Justices after election by the public. The new Town Council, now the body representative of the ratepayers, sent in April 1839 a list of suitable names to the borough magistrates. These were appointed, and the ten for the township of Manchester then presented themselves at the office in Fountain Street to be sworn in. Meanwhile the bellicose Churchwardens continued their customary practice of presenting their list to the County Bench—they would not recognize the Borough Bench. Although it was quite irregular, and although the majority of the County Bench decided against such action, two of their number did appoint these men as Overseers for Manchester, Chorlton-on-Medlock and Cheetham. No dispute arose over Hulme and Ardwick. In Manchester the Churchwardens refused to attend to administer the oath to the Overseers appointed by the Borough Bench. After several meetings of the Board, for which the minutes record "no business," these Overseers attended and swore one another in.

The question of the validity of the appointments made by the County Bench came up before Quarter Sessions with J. F. Foster in the Chair. He decided in favour of the Corporation, but the rival Overseers continued in office, and nice legal questions arose from the grant by the Queen's Bench of a mandamus commanding the Churchwardens to swear in the Borough Overseers. The question was argued before the House of Lords, but no clear decision was given. Meanwhile the Borough Rate was held up through lack of power to levy it. The Churchwardens and Overseers, and the hostile Overseers of Cheetham refused to levy the Borough Rate authorized by the Council in May, but got their own rate allowed by the county magistrates and levied that. The Manchester Police Commissioners, also with a hostile majority, continued to

levy the whole of their Police Rate, although the Borough Rate should have superseded that part of it which was required for the payment of the police.

The ratepayers really had good cause for grumbling then. Three rates were levied in the townships of Manchester and Cheetham: the Borough Rate, the Police Rate and the Poor Rate, including the amount for the Constables' day police force. Each side warned the public against paying any but the rates it had authorized. In addition the Churchwardens raised about £16,000 more than was necessary and invested a large part of it in exchange bills, which they intended to hold in order to pay their own costs in resisting the demands of the Corporation. In spite of the decisions of the magistrates against such action, the Churchwardens still held on to their bills instead of handing cash over to their successors. They even seem to have been successful in getting the public to believe that the extra rates were all caused by the grant of the charter!

Truly, Manchester lived through exciting times between February 1838, when the first meeting for the charter set free the hounds of party strife, and August 1839, when the situation was so serious that the Government intervened to maintain order. It is curious that whilst there are references in contemporary diaries to the "turnouts," riots and Chartist demonstrations, there is hardly anything said about the conflict between the rival authorities fighting for the control of Manchester, the distractions of the various rate demands, or the undignified incidents of the quarrel.

In the early part of 1840 the authorities decided to try another approach. They issued a distress warrant in lieu of paying over the rates against George Clarke, the senior Churchwarden re-elected for a second time because of his energy in opposing the charter. He was the only one who had property within the borough. The bailiffs appeared at his mill in Pollard Street, and the mill hands, ready enough for a scrap even if the quarrel did not directly affect them, turned the hose on the bailiffs. A hundred police were mustered and the chief result seems to have been that Mr. Clarke's son lost his head in the excitement and was summoned for assault the next morning. An action against the magistrate who signed the distress warrant was then started, and a decision was still pending eight months later.

If dignity was often sacrificed on both sides, there is an

element of humour which, looking back now, we can recognize in incidents like the double election to fill a Parliamentary vacancy in 1839, on the first day under the Borough Reeve, who had previously been the Returning Officer, and on the second under the Mayor, who would be the Returning Officer if the charter was declared valid;¹ or the rival dinners in celebration of the Queen's marriage in February 1840 when, the Mayor having announced that a public dinner at which he would preside would be held in the Town Hall, a hundred and fifty gentlemen who did not acknowledge his right to the title signed a requisition to the Borough Reeve and Constables asking them to make arrangements for a public dinner under the chairmanship of the Borough Reeve. However, John Brooks, who then held that position, was a member of the Council and would have nothing to do with it. Instead he acted as vice-president to the Mayor at his dinner. The belligerent Churchwardens, however, only too ready to seize any excuse for public controversy, organized a rival dinner under the chairmanship of George Clarke.

The Old Church was even made the scene of one incident in the quarrel. It was usual for the Borough Reeve and Constables to have a pew reserved for them by the courtesy of the Churchwardens. The advent of Sir Charles Shaw coincided with the choice of a Borough Reeve and Constables² who were friendly to the Corporation. When the customary invitation was sent by the Churchwardens to the Borough Reeve the Constables were expressly excluded on the ground that room was needed for Sir Charles Shaw. Correspondence was carried on from October to January on this point, but on one Sunday in December the enraged Constables appeared in the church, took down the tickets which bore the names of Sir Charles Shaw and the senior Churchwarden, tore them into pieces and threw them on the floor. It was only because Sir Charles Shaw diplomatically absented himself from church in future that similar scandals were afterwards averted. Our forefathers certainly quarrelled more wholeheartedly than we do, or else our manners are better. It is impossible to imagine such scenes taking place in public between men of high local standing to-day.

¹ Fortunately the same candidate, R. H. Greg, was successful both times with a majority of 127 the first day and 250 the second.

² John Brooks, David Price, and David Ainsworth.

This discreditable and hampering state of affairs lingered on until the judgment was given in the case of *Rutter v. Chapman* in February 1841 by five out of the seven judges of the Exchequer. An appeal to the House of Lords was threatened, but not pursued. Sir Frederick Pollock, who had been the chief legal adviser to the anti-charter party, had now, by the change of Ministry, become Attorney-General under Sir Robert Peel. That may have had something to do with his advice to the Churchwardens and Overseers that, even if an appeal were made, there would be little chance that the decision would be reversed, and that they had better levy the Borough Rate. The heavy costs of litigation were also being felt by the anti-charter party, so Oswald Milne and his friends, now that they realized the inevitable, turned their energies into getting compensation for the offices that they had no hope of retaining. They tried two simultaneous lines of approach. One was a letter to the Mayor, William Neild, suggesting that as an appeal might be made to the House of Lords and litigation continue for some time, a compromise might be reached "in case the disputes now pending can be settled upon fair and honourable terms"; and the other was to get Mr. Wilson Patten, one of the Lancashire M.P.s, to move amendments to a Criminal Justice Bill introduced by the Government.

As we saw,¹ only prisoners committed by the county magistrates, including those seven who were both county and borough magistrates, could be admitted to the New Bailey Prison. The borough magistrates, and the Court of Quarter Sessions with its Recorder, had therefore been practically inactive since November 1839, whilst the County Sessions were overcrowded, with the result that great inconvenience and expense to witnesses, barristers and members of the jury were caused. Also, there was no power to pay the county magistrates the cost of keeping the borough prisoners in prison. The same difficulties from the same cause were experienced in Birmingham and Bolton, and the Criminal Justice Bill introduced by the Government was a Bill to legalize the contracts with regard to the custody of prisoners and to remove all doubts as to the grant, both of the Commissions of the Peace and of Quarter Sessions, to the boroughs concerned. Neither of these points was settled by the judgment in the *Rutter v. Chapman* case because, although

¹ See below, pp. 101-102.

that established the charter in practice, it only settled, in law, the validity of the appointment of the Borough Coroner.

When the fight was thus transferred to Parliament, Oswald Milne was able to call upon his county friends for help. He was certainly audacious for he induced Mr. Wilson Patten, M.P., to propose two additional clauses to this Bill—one, giving compensation to the Coroner, the Clerk of the Peace and the Clerk of the Justices in Manchester, and another confirming the charter and ordering a special Borough Rate to be levied in Manchester to pay the costs of both sides in all the litigation concerned with the grant of the charter.

This news raised a storm of opposition in Manchester and put an end to the negotiations with the Mayor. A deputation consisting of the Mayor, William Neild, the ex-Mayor, Sir Thomas Potter, and the Town Clerk, Joseph Heron, went up to London, got hold of the Manchester members of Parliament, R. H. Greg and Mark Philips, and had an interview with the Home Secretary, the Marquis of Normanby, and with the Attorney-General. They also saw Lord John Russell, the ex-Home Secretary, who was conversant with the course affairs had taken in Manchester during the last three years. The discussion of the amendments in Parliament was postponed, and in the interval meetings were held in Hulme, Ardwick, Chorlton-on-Medlock and in many of the wards in the township of Manchester, at which resolutions protesting against the clauses and describing them as a "direct fraud" upon the inhabitants were passed, sent to the M.P.s, and in some cases brought by a deputation appointed by the meeting to the Council, which itself passed a strong resolution of protest.

When the discussion came up in the House of Commons,¹ the first proposal, that of making the ratepayers responsible for the cost of opposing the charter, was withdrawn without a division in view of the strong feeling against it. The second proposal, dealing with compensation, was rejected by 178 to 73 votes, after the Attorney-General had promised to bring in a measure to secure compensation to coroners who were displaced from acting in newly constituted boroughs and who had been omitted from the compensation clauses of the Municipal Corporations Act.

It might have been thought that this would have put an end to

¹ May 3, 1841.

Mr. Milne's attempts, but he was not so easily discouraged. The controversy over Manchester, in which Birmingham was also concerned, had brought to light certain omissions in the compensation clauses of the Municipal Corporations Act, under which all subsequent charters were granted. Section 66 directed that compensation should be given to "every officer of any Borough or County who shall be in any office of Profit at the time of the passing of this Act, whose office shall be abolished, or who shall be removed from his office under the provisions of this Act, or who shall not be reappointed."

The discussion on Mr. Wilson Patten's amendments had shown that the House of Commons felt considerable sympathy with the county officers, such as the Coroner and the Clerk of the Peace, who had been appointed for life and whose jurisdiction—and subsequent emoluments—were curtailed when a separate Court of Quarter Sessions and a separate coroner were set up for the new boroughs.

Mr. Milne's case was different. He could, and did, continue to act as Clerk to the Justices for the County, but part of their work was now done by the borough magistrates. The post of Clerk had not been abolished, nor had Mr. Milne been removed from it.

When the Criminal Justice Bill came up on report, the Government introduced a clause giving compensation to the coroners of Lancashire and Warwick, and a clause giving compensation to the Clerk of the Peace for Warwick. No opposition was raised to this clause by the Birmingham M.P.s. This Bill was read a third time and sent to the Lords. Meanwhile, the friends of Mr. Harper, Clerk of the Peace of Lancashire, realized that the Birmingham precedent could hardly be refused to Lancashire, and made representations to the Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor with success. The Government, therefore, decided to postpone the third reading of the Criminal Justice Bill in the House of Lords until a Bill to compensate the Clerk of the Peace for Lancashire could be passed through the House of Commons. This was too good a chance to be lost by Mr. Milne and accordingly, when the Bill was read again, he got another Lancashire member, Mr. Booth Wilbraham, to give notice that he would move a clause to give compensation to the Clerk to the Justices in Lancashire. Again the Manchester deputation went up to London and interviewed Lord John Russell, who

assured them that the clause would be resisted by the Government. The deputation also saw Mr. Booth Wilbraham, and fully explained to him "the unanimous feeling entertained by parties of all political opinions in Manchester against the unjustifiable attempt which was so pertinaciously made by Mr. Milne to obtain compensation from the ratepayers of the borough."

His effort was defeated in the House of Commons, but only by one vote, and a motion to recommit the Bill was carried. A new clause to give compensation to the Clerk of the Justices of Birmingham was then agreed to. Apparently, the reason for the difference between Manchester and Birmingham was that it had been agreed that the Birmingham clerk was not to be compensated in money, but to be given an appointment under the new Town Council, and this clause merely safeguarded the agreement.

An amendment to compensate Mr. Milne also was strenuously opposed by Mr. Mark Philips and, in spite of the previous discussion about Birmingham, was defeated by a majority of thirty-seven, which included two members of the Tory front bench, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Stanley. That put an end to Mr. Milne's hopes in the House of Commons. But when the Clerk of the Peace for Lancashire's Bill went to the House of Lords, the Earl of Wilton, another Lancashire friend, gave notice of a clause to compensate Mr. Milne also. The Town Council deputation started its interviews again with the Marquis of Normanby (Home Secretary), Lord Brougham, Lord Radnor and Lord Lyndhurst. Both Bills, the Criminal Justice and the Clerk of the Peace Bill, went into committee in the Lords together, and Lord Wilton, in order to embarrass the Corporation, moved to leave Manchester out of the Criminal Justice Bill. The voting being equal, the rule of the House gave the decision to him. However, the Marquis of Normanby explained that this motion, if carried, would only mean that Manchester was exempted from the clauses giving compensation to the coroner, as that was the only part of the Bill in which the word "Manchester" appeared. The Earl tried again, this time by moving a clause to exclude Manchester altogether from the operation of the Bill, but the Government opposed it strongly, won by one vote, and the report stage was passed. When it came up for third reading, Lord Wilton made yet another attempt to exclude Manchester on the sole ground that compensation had been refused to Mr.

Milne. He was supported by Lord Lyndhurst and the Duke of Wellington and, as he had taken care to marshal his supporters, carried the clause by thirty-four. The Government, therefore, threw up both Bills, saying that any of their lordships on the other side of the House were quite at liberty to take them up if they pleased. So the Bills were lost and Manchester, in common with Birmingham, had to continue to send its prisoners to the County Quarter Sessions instead of to its own, with all the delay and all the extra expense of witnesses, jurymen and barristers.

Nothing more was done until December 1841, when a change of Government had taken place and Sir Robert Peel had succeeded Lord Melbourne as Prime Minister. Owing to the good offices of Lord Francis Egerton, a deputation from the Council had an interview with Sir Robert Peel and explained the whole position and the trouble that Mr. Milne was causing the town. The Prime Minister was sympathetic but non-committal. Again there was a long interval, and then in July 1842 a Bill to compensate coroners and Clerks to the Justices of the Peace for Warwickshire and Lancashire and the Clerks to the Justices for the County of Warwick (Birmingham) was introduced by Sir Charles Douglas, a private member. This Bill took over the compensation clauses from the ill-fated Criminal Justice Bill and the Clerk of the Peace Bill of the late Government. Immediately the Mayor, the Town Clerk and Alderman Shuttleworth proceeded to London again to make sure that no attempt to compensate Mr. Milne would be made. After much discussion with Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, Mark Philips, and another member who had now taken up Mr. Milne's claims, the Bill was withdrawn.

After the decision of the courts in *Rutter v. Chapman* the position could not be left undefined as not only all future charters, but those of Birmingham and Bolton as well as that of Manchester were involved. The Government therefore introduced a Bill affirming the validity of the charters of Manchester, Birmingham and Bolton,¹ and putting in a clause giving to officers in the districts of the newly-created boroughs the same claim to compensation as the Municipal Corporations Act had given to officers in the old corporations. The Manchester deputation felt, although reluctantly, that they could not object on principle to such a provision. How-

¹ Borough Charters Confirmation Act, see above, p. 99.

ever, after the second reading, Mr. Milne discovered that the wording of the clause would not safeguard him, and he suggested various alterations which again a friendly M.P. undertook to propose. These alterations would, in the opinion of the Manchester deputation, "open the door to indefinite claims to compensation," and, with the help of Mr. Mark Philips, the Government resisted all but one, which seemed innocuous to the deputation. The wording is important, as Mr. Milne's claims were finally wrecked on it, although it was obviously intended to cover his case; from the report of the deputation, they also thought it did. After "every officer of any such borough or of any County" were added "or division of a County." Oswald Milne, it will be remembered, was Clerk to the Justices acting for the Division of Manchester in the County of Lancashire, and the greater part of his fees came from this source. The deputation reported: "After much deliberation, your deputation being satisfied that the addition of these words do not affect the principle of compensation involved in the clause as assented to, and that every claimant for compensation who might be able to show that he was an officer 'of any division of a county' would, in the construction of the clause, be held to be included within the words 'every officer of any county,' determined to offer no opposition to the introduction of the words suggested by the Attorney-General." The Borough Charters Confirmation Bill was therefore passed and became law in August 1842. All doubts as to the validity of the charter were at last settled. The Borough, Petty and Quarter Sessions could function once more and, above all, the Council could at last tackle the work for which it was created after four years of bitter and unprofitable strife.

There was still one further action to be taken before we can say that the battle was finally won.

As we saw,¹ in 1838 not only the township of Manchester but the out-townships of Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick and Hulme had bodies of Police Commissioners. The Municipal Corporations Act did not make the transfer of the powers of these bodies to the Council compulsory. That body took over the police powers, but left the lighting, cleansing and improving alone. But the Act enabled the Council to take them over if the Commissioners were willing. Until the validity of the charter had been established, no

¹ See above, p. 55.

move could be made. Chorlton-on-Medlock¹ was the first to hand over to the Council when, as no progress was made with an appeal from the decision in the *Rutter v. Chapman* case, every sensible person realized that the Town Council had come to stay. Ardwick followed in December 1842. The Manchester Police Commissioners, now governed by a majority friendly to the Corporation, decided to hand over at the same time, but because they owned the gas-works, which were subject to special local Acts, it was found necessary to get an Act of Parliament before the transfer could be legally made. This was obtained and the transfer effected by May 9, 1843. The Hulme Commissioners were the last to give up; it was not until December 8, 1845, that their powers were transferred. Possibly this was due to the fact that Oswald Milne was Law Clerk to the Hulme Commissioners. This was his last ditch.

The opposition to the charter, even from the beginning one of party politics rather than of principles, had become openly nothing but an attempt to get compensation for three individuals, chiefly for Mr. Oswald Milne. To that end the whole of the administration of the police and of the law had been hampered, extra payment foisted upon the ratepayers, and waste of time caused to many busy people. The fact that one man could bring so much influence to bear, and could hold up the administration of a big town for nearly four years, not only proves his legal skill—for he was indeed ingenious in the way in which he managed to find flaws in Acts of Parliament—but shows us, who are not involved in the disputes, that his case for compensation must have been stronger than the members of the Council, with the exasperation caused by years of conflict, could be expected to admit. He would hardly have found so many reputable members of both Houses of Parliament—including the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst—ready to support him if they had not felt that this was a case of political victimization on the part of a hostile Town Council.

When the Borough Charters Confirmation Bill was passed, doubtless Parliament thought, as did the Manchester deputation and presumably Mr. Milne himself, that his long struggle for his own hand had not been in vain, and that even if he could no longer be "Town Clerk in all but name," he could at least be comforted

¹ May 14, 1842.

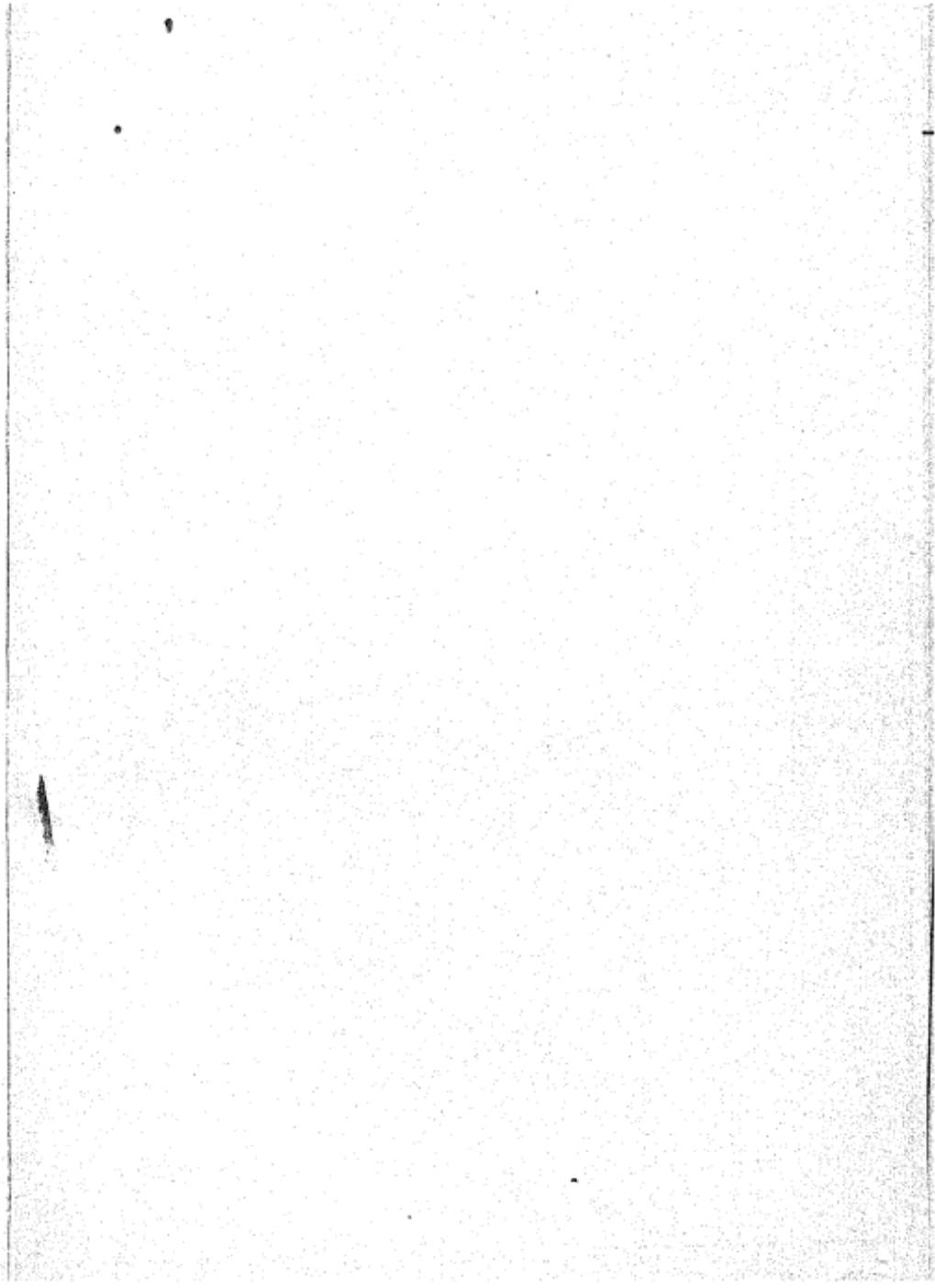
by a substantial sum in compensation. But he had not reckoned with the brilliant young Town Clerk, Joseph Heron, who was determined to drive a coach and four through this Act of Parliament if by this means the Council could finally rout its powerful enemy.

In accordance with the Act claims were sent to the Council by Rutter the Coroner, Oswald Milne, Clerk to the Magistrates, and R. J. Harper, the Clerk of the Peace, and the following April¹ a special meeting of the Council was held, at which Mr. Milne attended and was cross-examined by the Town Clerk in the presence of the members of the Council. Mr. Milne claimed £34,000 on three counts: that he had acted as Clerk to the Stipendiary Magistrate, that he had acted as Clerk to the County Magistrates who acted for the Division of Manchester, that he had acted as Law Clerk to the Police Commissioners for many years, and had been removed by them in August 1841.

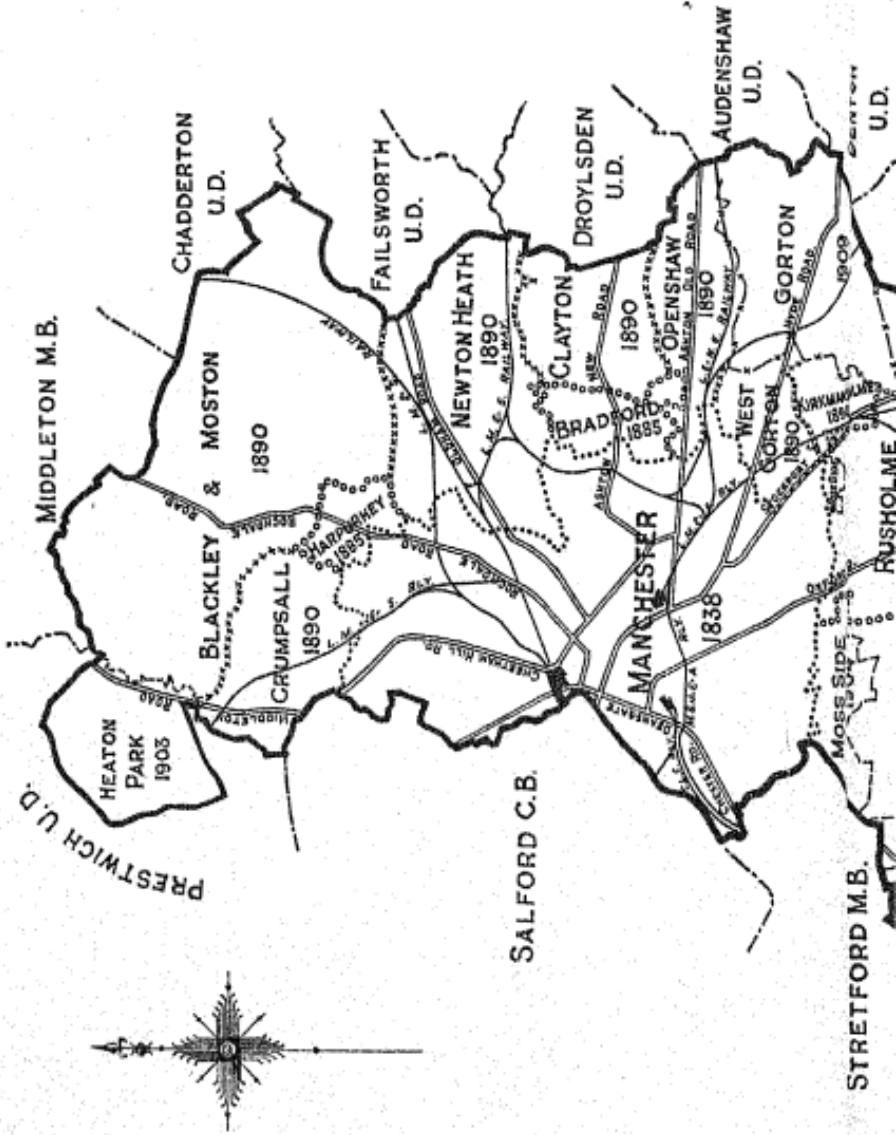
The opening scene is described by Sir E. W. Watkin as follows:

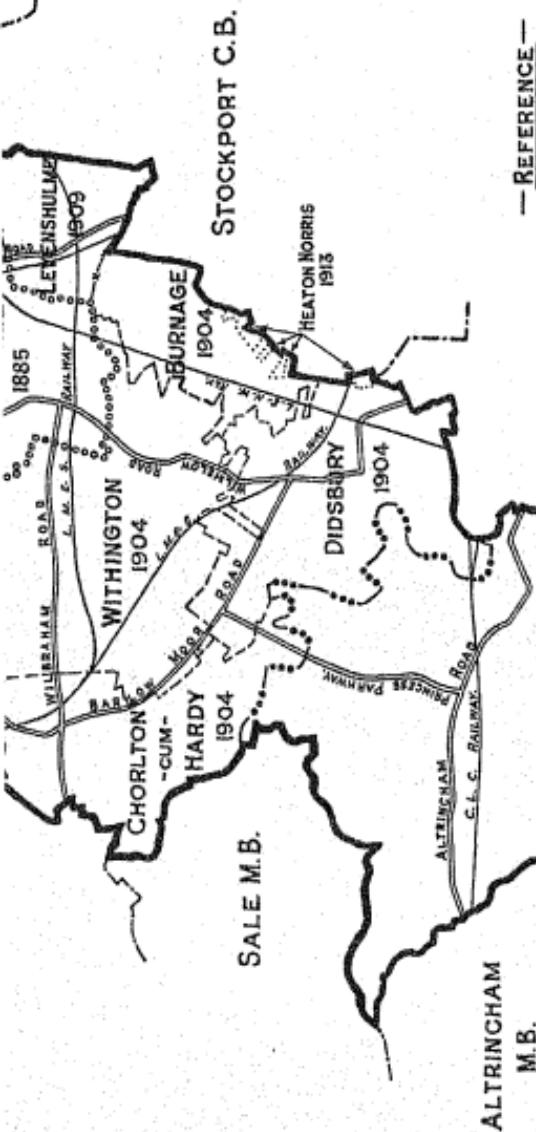
"Mr. Milne was then an elderly, portly, rather burly man, about five feet ten; what Burns calls 'a buirdly chiel' in appearance, with a fine forehead and determined mouth. Standing there (for he declined to sit) a picture of somewhat rough and decaying force, he and the elegant-looking, accomplished cross-examiner typified the old and new order of things sufficiently well in their own persons.

"Preliminaries over, the tall slim, glossy and ravenlocked town clerk—young, handsome, dandified, courteous, but perfect master at his business—at once probes his subject with the question—'At what date, Mr. Milne, were you appointed clerk to the magistrates of the Manchester Division?' Mr. Milne, in reply, has quite a fund of autobiography to communicate. He tells how he and his father, in their business as lawyers and law clerks, arranged things between them in his early days, more than thirty years ago. There seems a shade of regret for some long lost opportunity, or long past mistake in life, as the old man recollects how by choice or persuasion he got into the position he then took, 'or else (he concludes) I should not have been here today!' All this without a word or sign of interruption, and then the Town Clerk quietly repeats the question, precisely as before; Mr. Milne rambles off again, and the Town



PLAN SHOWING EXTENSIONS OF CITY SINCE 1838





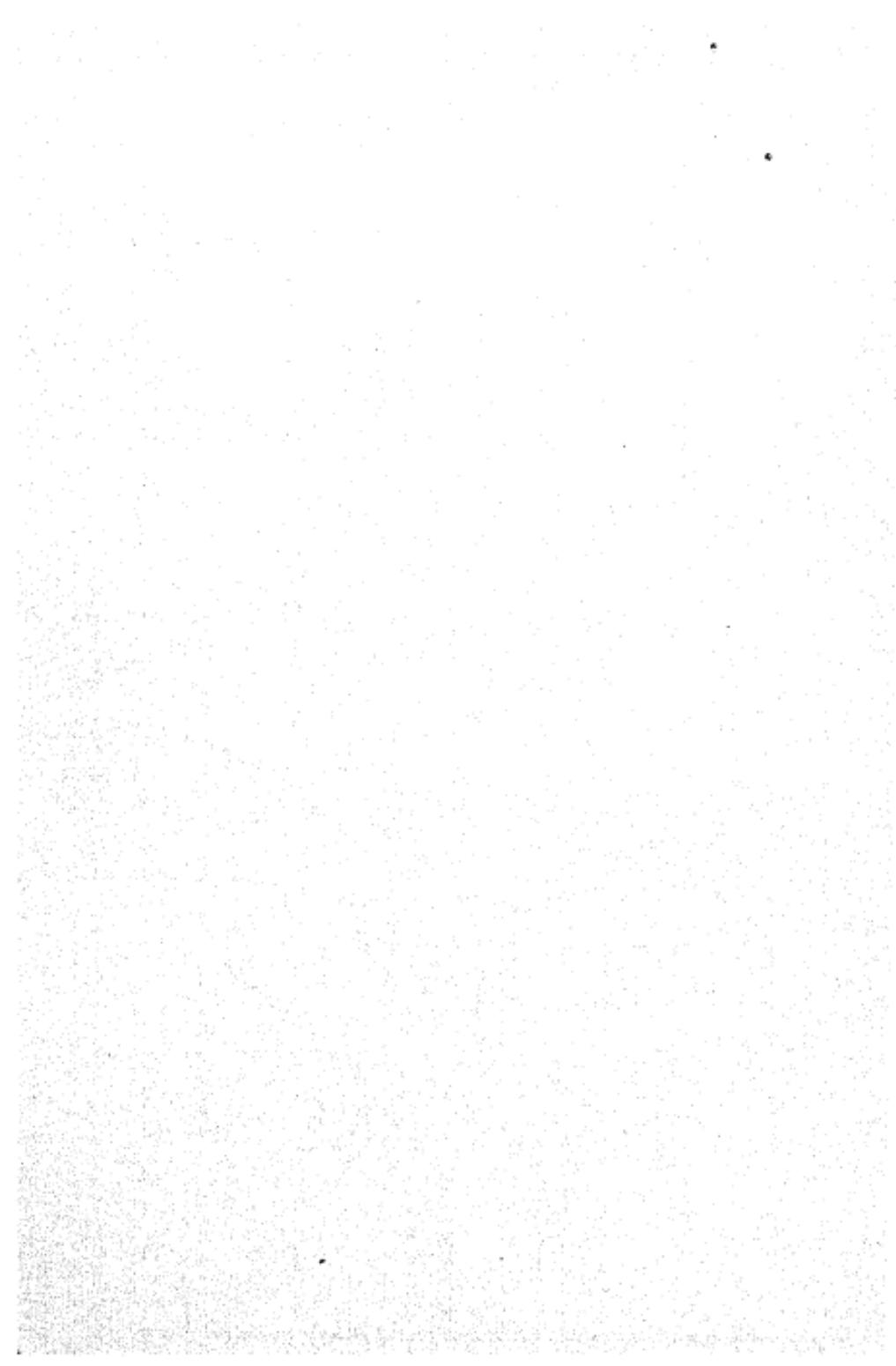
—REFERENCE—

Original Boundary shown thus: *
 Boundary of 1885 Annexation: oooooo
 1890: *
 1903: *
 1904: *
 1909: *
 1913: *
 1931: *
 Present City Boundary: —

WYTHENSHAWE
1931
ALTRINCHAM
M.B.

CHEADLE &
GATLEY U.D. 1931
BUCKLOW R.D.
WILMSLOW
U.D.

—SCALE = ONE INCH TO 1½ MILES—



Clerk continues to pin him. But nothing more definite is obtainable than that every county magistrate appointed for a generation past had found it convenient to call and commit himself to the hands of Mr. Milne. Had the collective bench met specially to give him a public post, it could not have been in his eyes, better established."¹

It was quite clear that Mr. Milne had never been appointed either as Clerk to the Stipendiary or as Clerk to the Magistrates, in any legal sense. His father and then he, as part of the business of the firm Sergeant, Milne and Sergeant, had done the legal business of all the public bodies in the township of Manchester: the Borough Reeve and Constables, Commissioners of Police, Churchwardens, Overseers of the Poor and Surveyors of Highways, not to mention the Police Commissioners of Hulme, as well as the work of the Justices. Oswald Milne, when he joined the firm in 1808, took over this public work. He would have preferred to devote himself to private work, he said, which would have been more lucrative, although his audience must have heard this with amusement. Apart from the fact that he could bring no evidence that he had ever been legally appointed, the Town Clerk got him to admit that other divisions of the county for magisterial work had been made during the time that he had been Clerk to the Justices, which probably reduced his fees, but that he had never claimed compensation in respect of those.

His claim for dismissal by the Police Commissioners two years previously was made to the Council because the Commissioners were in the act of transferring their powers to that body. His dismissal had been an act of the Commissioners when the turn of popular feeling gave a majority friendly to the Corporation in 1840. This meant that as soon as possible a transference of their power would take place to the Corporation and, in order to avoid giving Mr. Milne any claim for compensation, they decided to vote the office of "Clerk" vacant. The Tory minority left the room in protest and a clerk and not a law clerk was appointed. The Commissioners offered their legal work to Mr. Milne's firm but he declined, fearing to prejudice his claim to compensation. A section in the Police Commissioners Act gave that body freedom to appoint or remove any of its officers, clerks, treasurers, collectors of the

¹ *Alderman Cobden of Manchester*, by Sir Edward Watkin, p. 49.

Police Rate, scavengers, lamplighters, etc. There was obviously no case here for compensation. The Town Clerk elicited the fact that Mr. Milne had always sent in his accounts to the Commissioners in the name of his firm, and as that firm had been offered—and had declined—the legal work, the position was unaltered.

The interview was conducted on both sides with perfect politeness and occasionally with humour, but it is easy to sense the underlying bitterness on both sides, and the triumph on that of the Town Clerk as he made the older, and hitherto unassailable, solicitor flounder and contradict himself. One cannot help feeling that if Mr. Milne had behaved differently from the beginning of the struggle and had helped, or at least not used every weapon to prevent, the formation of the Town Council, and when that was impossible, to obstruct it, the result would have been different. The Act left the Council free to decide upon the claim for compensation, and it would have been easy to say that in spite of a lack of any legal evidence, Mr. Milne had been *de facto* Clerk to the Magistrates and to the Stipendiary, and that undoubtedly his fees and emoluments had decreased considerably since the establishment of borough magistrates and of the Town Council.

Political feeling had run high all through the intervening years, and Oswald Milne did nothing personally to reduce it. Shrewd and able though he undoubtedly was, he made the mistake, once the charter had been granted, of carrying on the fight merely for his private interests. There is, therefore, a certain poetic justice in the fact that the man who had formerly employed every possible legal quibble to obstruct the Council should have been beaten in the end by a legal quibble.

Manchester business men have come in for more than their fair share of criticism on the ground that they have pursued their own interests regardless of those of the community. It should be remembered in their defence that leading business men like William Neild, Thomas Potter, Richard Cobden, George Wilson, Elkanah Armitage and many more gave generously not only of their money but of their time, from 1838 to 1843, to establish a sound form of local government for their town, whilst their chief opponent was a solicitor who, however persuasively he induced the Churchwardens, Overseers and the Police Commissioners to withstand this move, was really actuated solely by the desire to retain the fat fees that,

as Manchester had grown, multiplied themselves over and over again in his pockets. The scene in the old Town Hall on that April morning nearly a hundred years ago, when the portly, middle-aged, successful, cynical solicitor was confronted by the brilliant young man, so happily chosen by the city fathers as their first Town Clerk, represented the overthrow of the old order by the new.

Henceforward, privilege and private interests in the affairs of the town were to give way to a popularly elected efficient body of men with a legal adviser, who was to prove so much more than that during his long term of office of over fifty years. He won his first, and in some ways his most important victory, for it established his reputation in the eyes of the public, when he patiently, politely but inexorably made the older, practised solicitor admit that his appointment had no legal sanction, and thereby saved the ratepayers thousands of pounds of compensation.¹

Mr. Milne, as we might expect, did not accept the decision of the Council as final. He first applied to the High Court for an order to force the Council to assess his compensation. This was granted, although the Lord Chief Justice (Lord Denman) said the Court had had some difficulty in coming to a conclusion, and expressed a strong opinion that Mr. Milne was not entitled to any compensation for the loss of his clerkship to the Police Commissioners. The Council stuck to its original position, and the matter was tried at the Liverpool Assizes in August 1844, when the Attorney-General appeared for Mr. Milne and the Solicitor-General appeared for the Corporation. The judge, Sir Creswell Creswell, before his elevation to the Bench, had been the leading counsel for Mr. Rutter in the *Rutter v. Chapman* case. It was to this that Alderman Kay ascribed the fact that he so directed the jury that they found for Mr. Milne; but in successive pleadings in the higher courts his claims were gradually and singly disallowed, and in 1848 the end came when, of his £34,000 claim, nothing was left!

The claims of Rutter, the County Coroner, and Harper, Clerk to the Peace of Lancashire, were also heard before the Council. An annuity of £175 was offered to Rutter, who claimed £344 and expenses, but the former figure was upheld on appeal by the Lords

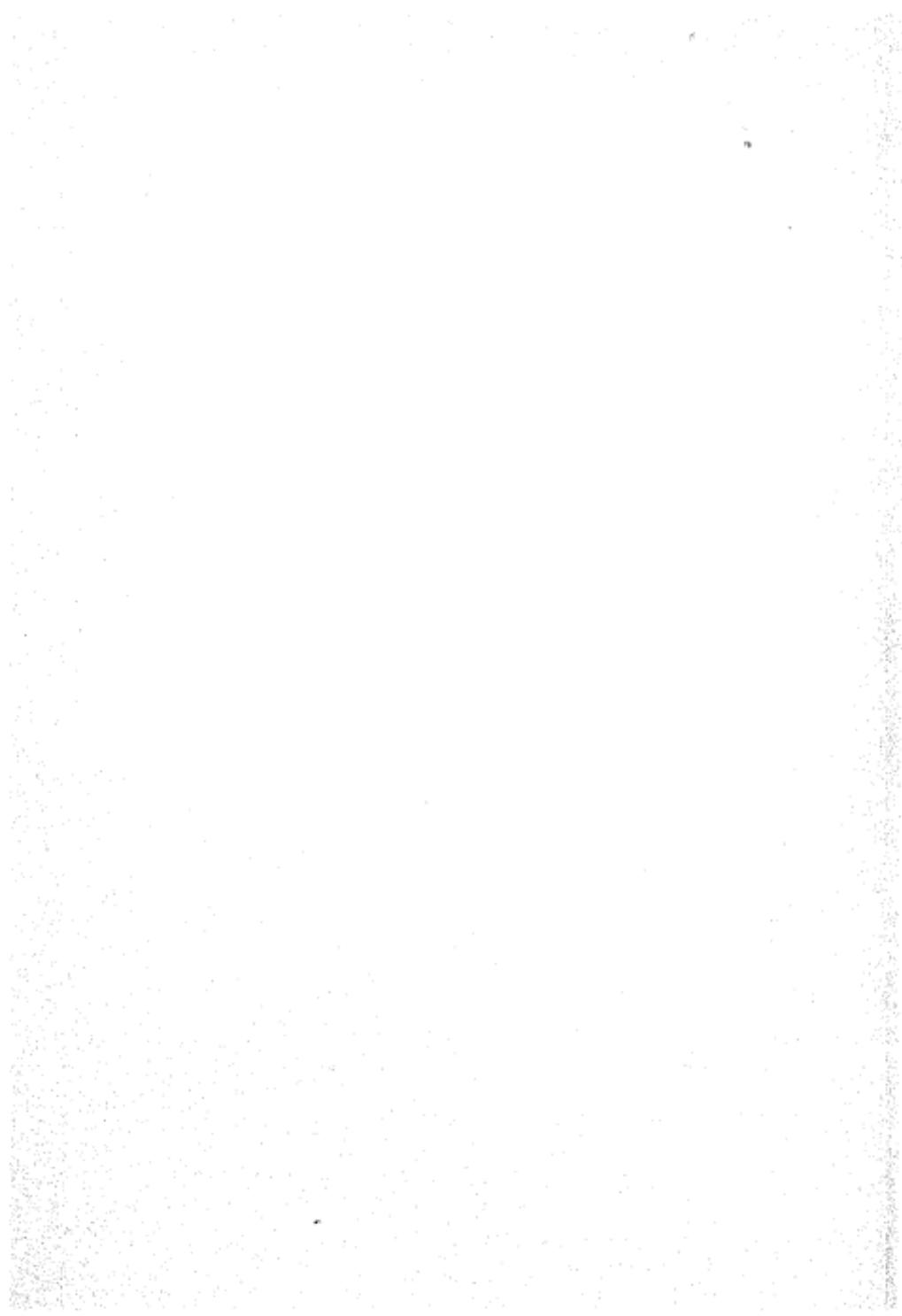
¹ The total saving was calculated at £56,000 (City Council Minutes, January 2, 1861).

of the Treasury, as was one of £6 8s. to Mr. Harper,¹ who had claimed £744. So by June 1849 the Council could congratulate itself that after eleven years the fight had ended with the award of a yearly sum of £181 8s.² for the lifetime of two men, and nothing to the man who had been mainly responsible for all the trouble.

¹ As the County Court of Quarter Sessions, to which he was Clerk, had concurrent jurisdiction with the Borough Court of Quarter Sessions, and as certain cases might be heard in either Court, both the Council and the Lords of the Treasury felt that the loss of fees must be a matter of speculation.

² Mr. Harper was more successful in his claim upon the Bolton Corporation, the establishment of which had also deflected work from the County Court of Quarter Sessions. He received, without any litigation, the whole of his claim (Manchester Council Minutes, January 2, 1861).

PART II



HOW THE CITY GREW

TABLE SHOWING THE EXTENSION OF THE CITY

Year	POPULATION			AREA		RATEABLE VALUE	
	Before Extension	Added Area	Before Extension	Added Area	Acres	£	
1838 Manchester, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Hulme, Ardwick, Beswick and Cheadle	242,357	—	—	4,293	—	669,954	—
1885 Harpurhey, Bradford, Rusholme	332,361	41,222	4,293	1,642	2,391,732	19,777	
1890 Blackley, Moston, Crumpsall, Newton Heath, Openshaw, Kirmanshulme and W. Gorton	378,800	126,568	5,935	7,002	2,416,330	381,675	
1901 Kirmanshulme Lane	543,872	—	12,937	—	3,394,879	—	
1903 Heaton Park	543,872	73	12,938	721	3,427,743	1,000	
1904 Moss Side, Withington, Burnage, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Didsbury	543,945	62,879	13,659	6,246	3,665,377	417,742	
1909 Gorton and Levenshulme	606,824	38,049	19,905	1,740	4,353,139	201,786	
1913 Heaton Norris (part)	714,281	52	21,645	45	4,740,501	500	
1931 Wythenshawe	759,474	6,859	21,690	5,567	6,554,549	43,161	
1937 (after deduction of two acres under Local Government Act, 1929)	751,371	—	27,255	—	6,661,545	—	

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE CITY GREW

THE municipal boundaries defined by the charter were not, as we saw, coterminous with the Parliamentary boundaries.¹ The latter contained the townships of Bradford, Harpurhey and Newton Heath, in addition to those of Manchester, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick, Beswick, Hulme and Cheetham, which made up the municipal borough.

The population of the borough in 1838 was 242,357,² and the area that it covered was 4,293 acres. It was many years before the Council began seriously to consider the extension of the city, although overtures were received from time to time from the out-lying districts. Most of the districts contiguous to Manchester—which eventually came within the city boundaries—had become District Boards of Health under the Public Health Act of 1848 and the Local Government Act of 1858.³ But as the population of these districts grew, helped by the outward push from Manchester, their problems became too big for their limited powers. Sewage was the chief factor that made the districts, one by one, ask to be taken into the city. The expense of proper systems for sewage treatment after the Rivers Pollution Act gave Manchester the right to prohibit other areas from emptying untreated sewage into the rivers that ran through her boundaries, led Newton Heath, Bradford and Harpurhey to apply in 1880 to come into Manchester.

Extension of 1885

The Council was ready to receive these overtures, partly because the census of 1881 had shown that Manchester had suffered a decrease of nearly 10,000 in her population since 1871 whereas the other big towns, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield and Leeds, had increased. Manchester, which had been larger than Birmingham two years earlier, was now smaller. A sub-committee was

¹ See above, p. 93.

² Privy Council Minutes.

³ Salford, which was larger than any of the others, was made a borough in 1844.

appointed to go into the whole question of extensions. It invited other districts, including Stretford, besides those that had applied to be incorporated, to consider the question, and it also approached Salford. However, all the others refused and Newton Heath finally broke away because she could not get the representation on the Manchester Council that she considered her due. Whether or not this was the real reason, she opposed the Council's extension Bill before the Select Committee of the House of Lords. Following an almost universal rule at that time, Parliament did not force unwilling areas into union with another, so Newton Heath was left out.

Meanwhile Rusholme had repented of her earlier refusal to meet the City Council, and her problems of sewage having become more urgent, was now anxious to have it taken into the Manchester system. Negotiations were completed and the first extension of the original city took place in 1885 with the addition of Harpurhey, Bradford and Rusholme, with which latter township was included a small portion of the township of Withington. This added 1,642 acres and 41,222 population to the original city. It also increased the membership of the Council by nine councillors and three aldermen.

Extension of 1890

The Local Government Act of 1888, which set up county councils, contained provisions for the alteration of boundaries of county councils and county borough councils by means of a provisional order of the Local Government Board granted after a local inquiry, instead of by a private Act. The Manchester City Council thereupon set up a sub-committee to consider the question of further extensions, as each year brought fresh evidence of the need for a wider area for sanitary administration. Parliament, too, recognized this fact, and when Crumpsall, rather than join with Manchester, produced a plan for a sewage farm to deal with her own drainage, Manchester successfully opposed it before the Parliamentary committee, so that Crumpsall had no alternative but to seek incorporation with Manchester. It was the sewage problem mainly that also now brought in Newton Heath—with six councillors and two aldermen—Blackley, Moston, Clayton, Openshaw, Kirkmanshulme and that part of Gorton nearest to the city. This

was the first occasion when the principle of differential rating was granted: 1s. in the pound for ten years to Openshaw, 6d. to Kirkmanshulme and 2d. to Gorton.

Strong opposition came from the other part of Gorton to absorption by Manchester—"a great octopus stretching out its fangs in every direction to take in all the tit-bits round about the city"¹—but the fear of property owners that amalgamation would mean the enforcement of a higher sanitary standard was alleged to be the real reason. "They dread being removed from under the authority of a paternal and benevolently disposed Board selected by themselves, and to come under the rule of an impersonal and exacting city council. . . . It is weary work trying to set the Board in motion, to move their solitary outdoor official to action, and it is a strange experience when the elephant does lift its legs for motion to see how tenderly the landlord is dealt with. And does not the landlord know how differently they do these things in the city! There, within a few hours after a complaint reaches the Town Hall, an Inspector makes his appearance, and with a huge disregard for tender feelings, this thick-skinned, non-benevolent official leaves his notice: 'If you do not do this thing within twenty-four hours, we shall do it for you and at your expense.' "² A movement on the part of some residents in Moss Side for incorporation with the city was also defeated, and Stretford, once more approached by Manchester, firmly refused for the second time.

The order of the Local Government Board, 1890, added to the city six districts and part of a seventh, Gorton, and 7,000 acres with over 100,000 extra population. Apart from the differential rate granted to some of the areas, others were exempted from the School Board Rate until accommodation should be provided.

Extensions of 1901 and 1903

There were no further extensions for ten years. The government of the surrounding areas was changed by the Local Government Act of 1894 into popularly elected urban and rural district councils, and the enlarged powers enabled them to deal with their own problems for some years longer. A small extension in 1901—

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, February 11, 1890.

² *Manchester Guardian*, July 20, 1888.

Kirkmanshulme Lane—for the purpose of a street improvement was followed in 1903 by the inclusion of Heaton Park, which had been bought by the city.

Extension of 1904

The next big extension, that of 1904, was the result of a movement from the ratepayers of Withington, Chorlton-cum-Hardy and Didsbury, where rates were increasing. The small margin between rates in these districts and those of the city seemed to the residents more than offset by the greater advantages enjoyed by the ratepayers of Manchester. The Withington District Council—perhaps naturally—did not relish the thought of extinction, but agreed to appoint a sub-committee to consider the matter. The report of this sub-committee is of interest because it tried to solve the problem of the loss of identity when a district is absorbed by a larger authority by a proposal which was, in effect, the one that the Council had adopted in 1838 and abandoned in 1875¹ of separate township committees. Whether or not the lesson of thirty years earlier had been forgotten, the proposal on this occasion was backed by the theoretical argument of a division of functions into central and local. Central functions were said to be those connected with gas, water, electricity, markets, tramways, education, finance, police, sewage and main drainage, whilst certain health services—sanitary inspection, paving, street improvements, scavenging, control of new buildings—were considered suitable for local control. The City Council agreed to this proposal as a condition of incorporation, and a Withington committee, consisting of the members of the Council for that area, was set up for ten years—the period of the differential rate of 6d. The Committee made up its own estimates for the matters under its control and these were then passed by the Council.

Moss Side now realized that with her powerful neighbour, Withington, within the city she must also come in, and the Manchester Corporation Powers Act of 1904 effected an extension of the city of another 6,000 acres.

The experiment of devolution was not a success, and when the ten years came to an end it was not continued. An inquiry held by a special committee of the Council reported against such a method

¹ See below, pp. 132-133.

of decentralization. "The reasons for the failure of the local Committee were obvious. The Committee had its own officials: clerk, surveyor, medical officer of health. They were under the control of the Committee and not under the head officials of the Town Hall. The district, therefore, had not the advantage of the services of the leading Manchester officials, who were responsible to different committees. The system was, in short, about as bad and unworkable a method as the wit of man could devise."¹ The advantages which accrued in 1875 when the separate township committees with their separate staffs were abolished, were experienced once again when, in 1914, the Withington district came completely under the control of the Council.

Extensions of 1909

When Levenshulme applied to come into the city, she asked for a district committee on the lines of the Withington Committee, but the Council was now opposed to the system of decentralization and the experiment was not repeated. The extension in 1909 to include both Levenshulme and Gorton—for the position was now reversed and Gorton was ready to pay a differential rate of an extra shilling in the pound *above* the Manchester rates in order to be allowed to be included—pursued a different course from any of the others. The Lancashire County Council's claim for compensation for the loss of these districts, although disallowed by the Committee of the House of Commons, was granted by that of the House of Lords. Manchester, therefore, withdrew the extension clauses from its omnibus Bill in spite of protests from Gorton and Levenshulme. These districts even brought an action for an injunction against the Corporation, which was unsuccessful. However, negotiations were opened with the suppliant districts and with the Lancashire County Council, and agreement was reached in 1909.

Extension of 1913

In 1913 Heaton Norris was wooed by both Manchester and Stockport, and although the former was awarded forty-five acres, Stockport carried off the major part of the area.

¹ *The City Council From Within*, by E. D. Simon, 1926, p. 219.

Extension of 1931

The last extension was that of 1931, when the Wythenshawe area of over 5,000 acres was incorporated. This move, which was the result of the purchase by the city in 1926 of over 3,000 acres in three parishes for the purpose of development as a satellite garden town,¹ had several features different from those of the previous extensions. The area was in another county—Cheshire—across the River Mersey. With the exception of the village of Northenden, the nearest point to Manchester, it was a completely rural area and access to the city was not easy. The people were satisfied with government by rural district councils and there was no movement amongst the residents for closer union with Manchester, although many of them lived in Northenden and worked in Manchester.

The movement for incorporation came from Manchester as a consequence of her purchase and of her proposed development. She realized that if the powers belonging to a local authority were added to those of a landlord, the difficulties experienced in the development of Letchworth and Welwyn would be avoided. Incorporation was violently opposed by two out of the three parishes and by the Cheshire County Council. This opposition succeeded in getting Parliament to throw out the Manchester Bill in 1927, but three years later her application was successful. As in all the other cases, drainage was finally the determining factor. Manchester claimed that by an extension of her existing system she could drain the area more quickly, efficiently and cheaply than could the rural district councils. When the first application to Parliament was made, the opponents could not or would not realize that Manchester, as the owner of the greater part of the area, really meant to develop it as she said, and a sympathetic House of Lords Committee gave the opposition the benefit of the doubt. When, after three years, Manchester made her second application, she was able to prove that her housing development had been held up owing to the insufficiency of the drainage provided, and so Wythenshawe came into the city and also into the county of Lancashire, although it is still within the Parliamentary division of Altrincham.

With the exception of Wythenshawe the other extensions of

¹ See below, p. 301.

the city followed the natural development of areas contiguous to a big city, with problems of sanitation and education becoming too big to be dealt with economically by small areas of government.

More interesting perhaps than the areas that Manchester incorporated were those that she did not—and of these Salford and Stretford¹ are the most important.

Salford

Salford, although a different manor, was in the parish of Manchester. Separated from Manchester by the River Irwell, she was yet closer to the township of Manchester, both geographically and by community of interests, than the other townships which formed the first borough. Pendleton, part of Salford, had become the fashionable residential quarter of Manchester business men after the decline of Ardwick. Sir Thomas Potter and his son, Sir John Potter, lived in Salford, although their business houses and their municipal interests were in Manchester. As we saw, no suggestion was made in 1838 to include Salford in the Manchester borough.

At various times since then the question of amalgamation has been raised, the first determined effort being in 1888. An association was formed of residents in both cities, which carried out an inquiry and presented a report in favour of amalgamation. It said that with regard to sanitary matters, and especially river pollution and infectious diseases, it was anomalous that there should be two authorities dealing with the same problems. Financially the Committee calculated that amalgamation would benefit Salford, as her rates would be reduced by 4½d. and Manchester's increased by 1½d. Greater efficiency and economy would be secured, sanitary reform accelerated and the opposition arising from divided authority removed. Commercially and industrially, educationally and intellectually, the inhabitants of the community would gain. "The total population of about 600,000 people engaged in the same industries, interlaced in a thousand ways, sharing the same prosperity and depressed by the same adversity, which is one by nature and one by business,

¹ Failsworth and Prestwich were included in the Corporation Bill of 1914 for incorporation within the city, but owing to opposition in those areas Manchester withdrew the application in both cases.

is divided into two local jurisdictions with different administrators, which are sometimes guided by rival or opposed policies and are always weaker for the division."¹

It speaks much for the far-sightedness of the Manchester City Council that, when approached by the Committee, it recognized that although upon purely financial grounds amalgamation would be immediately disadvantageous to the city, the prospective gains from a single administration—particularly in view of the Ship Canal development—would be greater. The Salford Corporation, however, although largely represented on the unofficial amalgamation committee, rejected the proposal chiefly on the grounds that Salford would be swamped by Manchester and that the combined Council would be too unwieldy. Reports by the Salford Council and rejoinders by the Committee followed one another with different estimates of future expenditure.

Finally, Mr. Oliver Heywood, the distinguished citizen of both cities, who had acted as chairman of the Amalgamation Committee, wrote to the Mayor of Salford, asking that a poll of the ratepayers might be taken and an independent body appointed to consider the financial side of amalgamation. However, the Salford Council refused to continue consideration of the question and the matter was dropped for sixteen years.

In 1904 both councils were approached by their citizens to consider the question again, and both agreed to do so. Opinions in Salford had altered in the intervening years, but when the Town Clerk was instructed to approach Manchester, asking it to appoint a sub-committee to approach Salford, the opponents of amalgamation on the Salford Council insisted, in an interview with the Mayor, that he should ask for the return of the letter. In 1906 the report of the committee appointed by the Salford Council—written by the late Alderman Desquesnes—was at last issued. It was entirely opposed to amalgamation, and its adoption by the Council by thirty-seven votes to eight put an end to this second attempt. The third attempt was again an approach in 1911 by some of the ratepayers of Salford to their Council. As a result, Manchester expressed herself willing to meet Salford to discuss the matter, but nothing came of this opening.

¹ Report of the Joint Executive Committee of the Association for the Consideration of the Amalgamation of Manchester and Salford, October 1888.

In 1921 the then Lord Mayor¹ called together a joint committee that had been appointed but had never met. The two Town-Clerks were instructed to prepare reports, but they were never presented.² By that date the expenses of municipal services in Salford, an area of low rateable value and consequent high rates, inclined Manchester to be less anxious for amalgamation. That tendency has increased in the last seventeen years. Rateable value in Salford is £5 9s. 1d. per head of the population as against Manchester £8 19s. 1d., and the rates are 17s. 2d. in the £ whilst Manchester's are 15s. 6d.³ If amalgamation took place and the social services in Salford were brought up to the Manchester standard, a rise in her rates would be inevitable. A differential rate against Salford for a number of years, as was applied in the case of Gorton, would almost have to be a condition of incorporation unless Stretford also came in. That borough with a rateable value almost as high as Manchester's—£8 16s. 5d. per head—has low rates of 11s 9d. because she has such a relatively small working-class population.

Salford was made a city in 1926, and this, combined with her status of a royal borough—because the King is the Lord of the Manor of Salford—provides the sentimental opposition to amalgamation with Manchester, by far the more important city. No one now denies that the two form one community, and should theoretically form one borough. Separate transport, gas, electricity, main drainage, public health and education are anomalous, even if not ridiculous.

Stretford

The question of the incorporation of Stretford was different from that of Salford. It was a suburban district which developed as a dormitory of Manchester, like Withington, Didsbury and Chorlton-cum-Hardy. We saw that when the Manchester Council was considering the first extension in 1885, it invited Stretford as well as other outlying districts to discuss the matter, but Stretford declined to walk into the parlour. In 1890, when the Ship Canal was nearing completion and as a consequence Trafford Park was beginning its rapid development as an industrial estate, Manchester again approached Stretford, but without success. The fact that

¹ Mr. (later Sir) E. D. Simon.

² *The City Council From Within*, by E. D. Simon, 1926, p. 206.

³ 1937-38.

Stretford had been allowed, in return for payment, to join in Manchester's sewage scheme, removed the lever which had proved decisive in bringing about the incorporation of similar districts. Ten years later—1900—another attempt was made. Stretford had grown rapidly, thanks to the Ship Canal and Trafford Park, from a population of 21,751 in 1891 to one of 30,346, but it had managed to keep its character as a suburban district and the industrial population who worked at Trafford Park lived in Manchester and Salford. This time the opening move came from Stretford, but not in the direction of Manchester. Stretford felt that she had outgrown urban district council status and applied for promotion to that of borough. One of the reasons was undoubtedly to protect herself from Manchester's attacks. Manchester lodged an objection with the Local Government Board against Stretford's application, and made renewed overtures to her, including the offer of a differential rate of 2s. 6d. in the £. It was only natural that the ratepayers of Stretford, looking at the matter purely from the point of view of their own interests, should object to an amalgamation which would almost certainly increase their rates, and they voted down the proposal by a large majority on a large poll. The Local Government Board felt that it had dealt out even-handed justice when, after a local inquiry, it refused both claimants. Manchester was not to have Stretford, but Stretford was not to become a borough. There the matter rested for more than thirty years, and the grant of incorporation as a borough was only conceded to Stretford in 1933. Meanwhile her skilful leaders had seized every opportunity to strengthen her independent position, and she exercised her option to buy back her gas-works from Manchester.

No impartial observer to-day would deny that Stretford is as much part of Manchester as their neighbour, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, and that whilst benefiting from the result of Manchester's investment in the Ship Canal, she escapes the heavy expenditure that a residential industrial population necessarily entails.

This argument takes us further from the city than Stretford—to Alderley Edge, Styall and Knutsford in Cheshire, with the intervening residential areas of Altrincham, Wilmslow, etc. Many of the arguments used in 1838 to justify the inclusion of Hulme, Chorlton-on-Medlock and Cheetham in the city could be used to-day to justify the inclusion of these more distant places. The various

extensions of the city since 1885 brought within its boundaries areas in which Manchester citizens had gone to live.¹ The motor car, motor buses and better train services have since that date increased this distance, and the new houses that have sprung up in Cheshire, which house Manchester workers, give another authority the rateable value that has been created by Manchester. The industrial population, which cannot afford to go outside, and upon which the prosperity of all the outlying districts depends, has to pay high rates whilst those who can afford to go out pay low rates. The problem which became acute in Tyneside has been the subject of a recent Royal Commission. We suggest that the problem of South East Lancashire and North Cheshire, of which Manchester is the metropolis, is becoming as urgent.

Modern developments have shown that existing boundaries are unsuitable for services such as transport, higher education, hospitals, etc. Some form of regional government, or of a regional rate, will probably prove to be the modern solution of the problem which was solved in the past by extensions of the city boundary.

¹ In 1937 it was estimated that the influx of the day working population was 74,944, equal to 10 per cent of the total population (*Financial Abstract*, 1925-37, p. 72).

CHAPTER V

RATING AND FINANCE

I

THE RATING AUTHORITY

As we have seen in Chapter II, the separate townships which were united to make the municipal borough of Manchester in 1838 all had their separate Overseers, Highway Surveyors and Police and Improvement Commissioners. Rates for the relief of the poor, for the maintenance of highways, for cleansing, lighting and paving streets and for the provision of scanty police forces were all separately levied by the various bodies—although they all used the assessment for the Poor Rate—and all separately collected.

After incorporation the Overseers of the five different townships sent to the Council returns of the rateable value in each township, and the amount of the Borough Rate was then apportioned. The Overseers of each township were then required by the Mayor to levy and collect that amount, and this was done as part of the Poor Rate. Gradually, as we saw, the powers of the various bodies of Police Commissioners were absorbed by the Council, and they had all disappeared by 1845. But the local Acts under which they had worked were not repealed for some years, and the local rates that they had levied were not absorbed into the city rates for many more years. What happened was that as each township gave up its body of Commissioners, the Council appointed a special committee of its members (the Township of Ardwick Committee, Township of Hulme Committee, Township of Chorlton-on-Medlock Committee), and these committees continued to exercise the powers given by the local Acts as regards lighting, paving and cleansing until 1851. The Council as a whole acted for the township of Manchester. Thus the streets of Hulme were cleansed by a separate set of men, acting under a separate committee of the Council from the men who cleansed the streets of Manchester on the one side and of Chorlton-on-Medlock on the other.

Nor did the combination of the townships in the municipal borough touch the varying methods of assessment of property, of allowances made to landlords for compounding, or of the limits of total exemptions from rates, all of which differed in the different townships.

With regard to total exemptions from rates other than the Poor Rate, Manchester exempted any house under £4 10s. annual value, Chorlton-on-Medlock under £4 and Ardwick and Hulme under £5. This system, which existed all over the country, was strongly condemned by the Commission that inquired into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts,¹ and also by the Poor Law Commissioners. Both of these bodies were convinced that it was the landlord and not the tenant who benefited by the exemption as the landlord was enabled to charge higher rents if his tenants had no rates to pay.

Exemption from the Police, later called the Township Rate, was also granted in Manchester on any property above £4 10s. which was less than one hundred yards from a street lamp, even if it was in a street which was cleansed, paved and drained, out of the same rate.

In 1851 the first faltering steps towards unification were taken in the Manchester Improvement Act of that year, which abolished all the separate Boards of Highway Surveyors and vested their powers in the Paving and Highway Committee of the Council. This was certainly progress, but the Highway Rate still had to be strictly apportioned to each township, levied and collected separately instead of being absorbed into the Borough Rate. Although the Act also repealed all the local township Acts, the township committees still continued to cleanse, light and pave the townships with separate staffs. The differences as regards exemptions from rates were retained and the collection in each township of each rate separately still continued.

Nothing more was done for twenty years when, in a local Act,² the Overseers were instructed to collect the Township and Highway Rates as well as the Poor Rate, which meant a net annual saving of £2,400.

This paved the way for the next big step in 1875,³ which abolished

¹ 1845.

² Manchester Improvement Act, 1871.

³ Manchester Corporation Waterworks and Improvement Act, 1875.

the township committees and instituted a City Rate which included the old Township and Highway Rates as well as the Borough Rate.

The gas-works, which had been the property of the Police Commissioners for the township of Manchester and had been managed by the Gas Committee of the City Council since their demise, became the property of the whole city, and the profits could in future be used for improvements in any part of it instead of only in the township of Manchester.

The Lamp and Scavenging Committee was abolished and the cleansing of streets was handed over to the Highways and Paving Committee, which was made responsible for all matters relating to the surface of the streets. The Gas Committee took over the erection of gas lamps all over the city. Finally, one city fund was instituted and one banking account.

In 1876 one City Rate, which included the precept of the School Board, was levied, instead of one City Rate and six Township and six Highway Rates.

It had taken thirty-seven years for the parochial interests of the separate townships to be merged in one city—years in which the population and the wealth of the city had been growing at a great pace. As the population increased it spread over the borders of the old township of Manchester, driven out by encroachments made on dwelling-houses by commerce and railways. The cost of repairing highways, of cleansing, lighting and paving the hundreds of new streets which were rapidly covering what had been open spaces in Chorlton-on-Medlock and Hulme at the end of the 'thirties rose. And the ratepayers in the other districts began to realize that the business quarter of the great city was not paying its fair share of the expenses of the area, and that some readjustment was necessary.

If one is inclined to wonder why no extension of the city boundaries took place for nearly fifty years after the creation of the borough, and then arose from the demands of the outside areas to come in rather than from a desire of Manchester to extend, one can perhaps find the explanation in the long time which it took for those who were in charge of the new form of government to assimilate the separate parts of the first amalgamation. Until all the creaking joints of the original borough were oiled, and all the

waste resulting from the separate townships eliminated, we can understand why the Council was not anxious to take in other areas merely to repeat the same process.

Having successfully surmounted the first hurdle in 1875 of a consolidation of rates within the city and the consequent administrative changes, the city next tackled the even more difficult and, as it proved, more obstinate problem of the consolidation of rating authorities.

The valuation of each township was, as we have seen, made by the Overseers for that township, and even after the Manchester Overseers Act of 1858 was passed, there remained separate Boards of Overseers for the townships. There was a further complication. Since 1841, Boards of Guardians had superseded the Overseers in the care of the poor. They, and not the separate Overseers, settled the expenditure of the Union and then precepted the Overseers—just as the Mayor did for the Borough Rate—for the share of each township. Now, if the borough of Manchester had made up one Poor Law Union, consolidation of rating authorities might have followed immediately upon the consolidation of rates. But a very different state of affairs existed.

The Chorlton Union comprised the townships of Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick and Hulme—all part of the municipal borough—and, in addition, Moss Side, Levenshulme, Rusholme, Didsbury, Withington, Gorton, Burnage, Chorlton-cum-Hardy and Openshaw, all of which eventually came into the city, although some of them as late as 1904.¹ The township of Manchester formed the Poor Law Union of Manchester, but Cheetham, also within the municipal borough, was in the Prestwich Union.

The valuation for the Poor Rate had always been, as we saw, the valuation used for all the other rates. Uniformity of valuation, therefore, was not only important in order that the burden of the Poor Rate should be fairly adjusted, but because all the rates were based on it. The sub-committee of the Council which examined this matter realized the great advantages which would accrue if there could be one Poor Law Union corresponding to the municipal area. A Board of fifteen Overseers would value on uniform principles, and equal rates could be levied. As an example of the inequalities then existing, it pointed out that the poorest township,

¹ It also included Stretford, but this township was detached in 1849.

Ardwick, had to pay 5d. more in the £ than Cheetham, the richest. The cost of collection would also be reduced by one-half.

This first-class report, with its unanswerable case, was accepted by the Council, although that body would not commit itself to the principle of one Poor Law Union. Authority was given to insert in the Bill for the extension of the city¹ the necessary powers to consolidate the Overseers of all the townships in one Board.

However, forces outside the City Council, the Boards of Guardians, objected and their opposition was so strong that in order not to prejudice the extension clauses of the Bill, the consolidating clauses were withdrawn and the old, unequal and wasteful machinery continued for another decade.

By 1893, after a second extension of the city,² the position had become even more complicated. There were now within the city boundaries nineteen separate rating districts under the control of eighteen separate Boards of Overseers! The prediction contained in the report of the Special Committee in 1883 that if nothing were done before the extension then imminent, the existing complications would be increased, had certainly been fulfilled.

The familiar arguments arising from the lack of uniformity were repeated by Alderman King, who gave examples of ratepayers on one side of a street paying rates of 5s 2d. in the £ and those on the other paying 7s. in the £; one paid in March, another in July; one landlord got an allowance of 15 per cent for compounding and another 30 per cent.

As, however, the Council realized the impossibility against opposition of substituting one rating authority for the whole city, it proposed instead to consolidate the Manchester townships within the respective Unions. Two big townships of North Manchester and South Manchester were formed, North Manchester, which included nine townships, became a single township in the Prestwich Union, which also included Prestwich and Failsworth outside the city. The township of South Manchester, which comprised six townships, formed part of the Chorlton Union, which also included Moss Side, Levenshulme, Didsbury, Withington, Gorton, Burnage and Chorlton-cum-Hardy, at that date still outside, and now within the city boundary. The whole of the city of Manchester was thus divided into three townships—the township of Manchester, itself

¹ Council Minutes, December 3, 1884.

² See above, p. 121.

a Poor Law Union, and the townships of North and South Manchester—both parts of other unions. This meant a considerable reform. Even if the Poor Rate was still levied by a collection of separate rating authorities, the City Rate would at least be levied by three Boards of Overseers instead of by sixteen, and a greater approximation to uniformity of rating should result. This change was made by order of the Local Government Board,¹ and came into effect on February 1, 1896.

The immediate result was financially satisfactory. That year, 1896, saw an increase equal to a rate of 1s. 4d. in the expenditure of the Council, but owing to the new arrangements, including the saving in the collection of rates, the increase was only 1s.

By 1910 further extensions² of the city in the south were made, and the townships concerned were consolidated and included in the South Manchester township.

This last step meant that there were now two complete Poor Law Unions within the boundaries of the city, the Union of Manchester and the Chorlton Union. The Union of Prestwich only had Prestwich and Failsworth in it in addition to the township of North Manchester. The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, which reported in 1909, had recommended unanimously that the area of a Poor Law Union should be the same as that of the county borough. The City Council hoped that legislation might result from this report, and that the obviously sensible arrangement which, ever since 1883, it had tried unsuccessfully to bring about by persuasion, would be settled by Parliament. The Finance Committee again set to work to prepare a scheme to set up one Board of Guardians and one Board of Overseers for the city.

This scheme was approved by the City Council,³ and a Bill promoted in 1911. The opposition of some of the Guardians, however, again succeeded, and the proposal was once more defeated, but not for long. Two years later the Local Government Board held an inquiry and gave a decision in favour of amalgamation of the three Poor Law Unions. In February 1915 one Poor Law Union was at last achieved. The final step then followed, namely, the amalgamation of the three townships, Manchester, North Manchester and South Manchester into one, and on February 7,

¹ Under the Local Government Act of 1888.

² See above, pp. 122-124.

³ August 3, 1910.

1916, the necessary order of the Local Government Board was made.

For the first time since the joining together of the original six townships to make the municipal borough there was one Board of Overseers for the whole area, and the one Poor Law Union—if not exactly co-extensive with the municipal boundary—only extended far enough beyond it to include Prestwich and Failsworth.¹

As a result of the Rating and Valuation Act, 1925, the Overseers were abolished. In place of one authority, the Overseers, who used to make assessments, hear objections to them and levy the rate, there are now two authorities. The City Council prepares the valuation list and levies the rate, and the Assessment Committee hears objections to the valuation list and has power to amend it.

II

GRANTS-IN-AID

The argument that the central Government should come to the financial aid of local authorities was first recognized in 1835, when a substantial grant towards the cost of the administration of justice was given by Parliament.

Two years before, the Government had given a grant of £20,000 in aid of education which, at that time and for many years later, was provided by the religious bodies.² This grant was distributed by them on the basis of £1 for every £1 raised locally by donations. It was a capital grant and six years later it was made to carry inspection with it.

The system of a percentage grant—50 per cent in the case of the salaries of Poor Law officers and teachers,³ and 25 per cent in the case of the police⁴—combined with inspection, remained in force for some years. The education grants, which increased rapidly, remained on the percentage basis—grants for building schools and for salaries of certificated teachers and unit grant payments for each pupil teacher trained by them—until 1861, when a

¹ These were transferred to the Lancashire County Council under the Local Government Act of 1929. ² See below, p. 215.

³ In 1846.

⁴ In 1856, 25 per cent of the cost of pay and clothing.

capitation grant, based on average attendance together with the results of an examination, was substituted for it. In 1874 a fixed capitation grant of 4s. for each pauper lunatic was given to Poor Law authorities for those lunatics who were maintained in a separate institution.

By 1890 the growth of local expenditure had been so great that appeals for more help were made to Parliament. The solution adopted was not to increase and extend percentage grants, but to sweep away all grants-in-aid except those for elementary education, and instead to allocate to local authorities the proceeds of certain taxes known as Assigned Revenues,¹ and 80 per cent of the Customs and Excise duties.² The Poor Law grants were stereotyped at the figure of 1888 and were in future paid to the Guardians by the City Council.

The principle of percentage grants was abandoned, and with it any relation between the growth of local expenditure and an increase of Government grant. True the assigned revenues, etc., were expected to increase and did increase, but the amount received by local authorities from this source bore no relation to the increase of their expenditure. The position was made worse in 1910 when, instead of the proceeds of the "Assigned Revenues," etc., local authorities were given a fixed sum each year equal to the amount received from the Assigned Revenues in 1908.

All these attempts, like Mrs. Partington's effort to sweep back the sea, failed. Public opinion was demanding better services and Parliament responded both by forcing more duties on local authorities, and by giving them permission to assume new duties. It was becoming increasingly clear that if the cost of nationally important but locally administered services was to be shared fairly between rates and taxes some form of percentage grant was inevitable.

So from 1912 we find the Government offering a 50 per cent grant for treatment of tuberculosis and mental deficiency, and, encouraged by the report of the Departmental Committee on Local Taxation in 1914, it extended the principle to the treatment

¹ These were allocated in 1888 and consisted mainly of local taxation licenses.

² These were allocated in 1890. A certain amount had to be spent on police superannuation and the balance on technical education—hence the term "Whisky Money."

of venereal diseases¹—75 per cent—and maternity and child welfare²—50 per cent. After the war the education grants, by now a tangle of all kinds of grants, were reconstituted on a complicated basis which, however, guaranteed to each authority a minimum of 50 per cent of its expenditure.³ The police grants, which had managed to remain on the percentage basis all the time, were revised and the basis enlarged to include all approved expenditure, not only pay and clothing, and maintenance grants for roads were given on a percentage basis.

The only grant not on this basis was the grant for houses, and this—after the expensive experience of guaranteeing local authorities all expenditure over that of the product of 1d. rate—was settled on the basis of a fixed amount for each house.

The unit grant is well fitted to housing, where the units can be easily counted and where the cost of the separate units represents the cost of the service, whereas in a service like education neither the unit of the school nor that of the child had proved suitable for the basis of grant. The Government grant for housing, although fixed for each house, does not limit the number of houses that a local authority can build and, as it is available for each house, it fulfils the condition that the national exchequer should share the cost of an increasing service with the local ratepayer.

Government grants still left a large part of the local expenditure unaided—main drainage, street cleansing, parks, baths, washhouses, libraries, Art Gallery and the major part of Poor Law expenditure. The diagram on page 140 shows the position in 1913–14 before the main introduction of percentage grants, and in 1928 before the system was revised. The percentage of expenditure met by grants had increased from 16.5 per cent in 1913 to 20.3 per cent in 1928.

Percentage grants certainly encouraged expenditure in the sense that ratepayers were able to provide many services at half cost,⁴ and the period between 1912 and the first post-war slump in 1921 was one in which the Government was anxious to increase and develop all the social services. The reaction came, however, and

¹ In 1917.

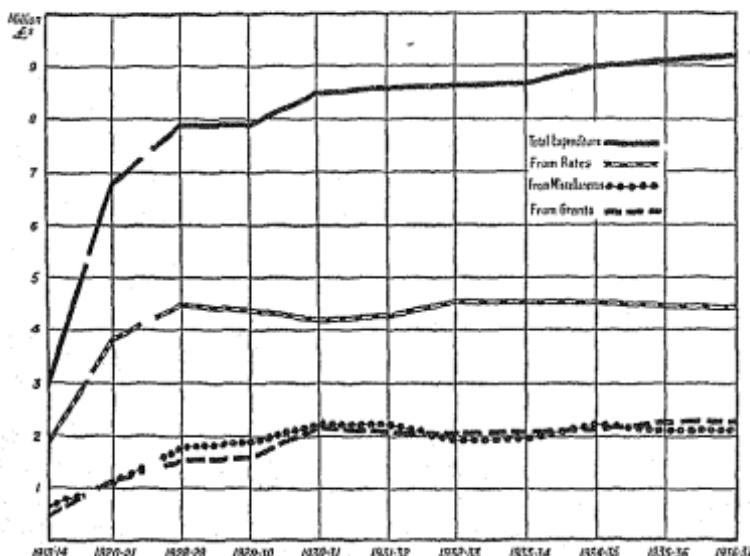
² In 1918.

³ This guarantee was abolished in 1931.

⁴ When in 1913 the Manchester City Council considered taking over the treatment of tuberculosis from the Guardians, it was shown that owing to the 50 per cent grant there would be a saving of £10,000 to the rates, after allowing nearly £40,000 extra for the necessary development.

after various attempts by the Government to reduce local expenditure and therefore Government grants-in-aid, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, when Minister of Health, took the bull by the horns, or rather by one of its horns. In the reorganization which abolished the Boards of Guardians he established derating for industry and

TOTAL RATE FUND EXPENDITURE, INCLUDING POOR LAW, FOR THE YEARS 1913-14, 1920-21, 1928-29 TO 1936-37, SHOWING THE DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INCOME.



agriculture, the substitution of a block grant for the health grants¹ and for some of the road grants, and compensation for the rates hitherto received from industry. Education, police and main roads in counties were left on the percentage basis.

Five millions of new money—in addition to the amount received in 1928 from the percentage grants and from some of the assigned revenues—was added.

The grant was fixed first for three, then four and then for five years at a time, and it is distributed to local authorities on a formula

¹ Maternity and child welfare, venereal diseases, tuberculosis, mental deficiency and blind aid.

which will gradually become operative for the whole amount.¹ The formula takes into account population, number of children under five, rateable value per head of the population and the amount of unemployment in the area.² These factors, which are completely outside the control of local authorities, are supposed to represent their need for Government help. In that way it is much more scientific than the system adopted when percentage grants—owing to their increasing cost—were abolished in 1888, but if the pool from which the distribution is made remained fixed in amount for all time, experience shows that rates would soon again have to bear an increased proportion of the expenditure.

To meet this situation, the scheme lays down that a recalculation is to be made at the end of each period, and if it is found that the five millions of new Government money is not enough to maintain the same proportion between the block grant and the total expenditure from rates plus block grant that had existed when it was first instituted in 1930, additional money necessary to maintain this proportion is to be contributed by the Government. It will thus be impossible for more than a year or two for the rate expenditure to outrun the Government grant, as it invariably used to do, but the proviso does not apply to each authority but to the country as a whole.

The loss of rates due to derating industry and agriculture was calculated on the rates received in 1928. In that year rates in Manchester were 13s. 4d., to-day they are 15s. 6d., yet the Government refused to compensate for any increase of rates.

There is another way in which this stabilization at one year's rates is unfair to the local authority. Any new factory or workshop which has come to Manchester since 1928 has automatically paid rates on only 25 per cent of its rateable value, but the figure upon which the Government calculated its compensating grant was the rateable value of industrial hereditaments in 1928. Manchester is losing in this way over £40,886 this year, which is the amount that the industrial enterprises which came to the city since 1928, or which only claimed to be derated since that date, would be paying

¹ In 1947. Until then only part of the grant is calculated on the formula; the other, a diminishing proportion, is the amount received from grants and rates from industry in 1928.

² For counties mileage of roads is included, but this does not affect Manchester.

in rates if they had not been derated. There is no compensation for this in the block grant.

When the Bill became law it was expected that as the result of the block grant an increased burden would be thrown on to the householders, shopkeepers and occupiers of offices and warehouses—for industry is now only rated at 25 per cent—if the Council continued to expand its expenditure on health services as it had done in previous years.

In 1928, the year before the new scheme came into force, the proportion of the total expenditure of the Corporation, including that of the Poor Law Guardians, borne by Government grants was, as we saw, 20·35 per cent.¹ In 1937 it was 26·23 per cent. In spite of all expectations to the contrary, the surprising result is that the Government is actually bearing a larger part of the cost of local expenditure in Manchester after the institution of the block grant than before. Certain grants, of course (e.g. for education and police) were left untouched, but whereas in 1928 Government grants were 49 per cent of the expenditure on education, they have fallen to 47·4 per cent in 1937, so that the explanation does not lie there. The percentage for police is unchanged. How, therefore, has this state of things been brought about?

If we look at the diagram on page 140 we see that, although during the whole period from 1928-29 to 1936-37 there has been an increase of expenditure of £1,271,050, there has only been an increase of £44,730 from rates.² Grants, on the other hand, have increased by £797,452 during the whole period, although they dropped in 1931-32. Miscellaneous receipts,³ although they also fluctuated, were £428,568 more in 1936 than in 1928. Thus, whereas in 1928, 57·1 per cent of the total expenditure was met by the rates, in 1936 this had fallen to 49·6 per cent, and grants had risen from 20·3 per cent in 1928 to 26·2 per cent in 1936.

This state of affairs, so different from what was anticipated, is due to two causes. In the first place not only did the block grant

¹ See above, p. 139.

² The increase has been greater during the period and was at its peak in 1934. This was largely owing to the cost of public assistance, which rose to £951,000 that year, with practically no compensating grant from the Government.

³ House rents, receipts from school fees, etc., payments for hospital treatment, etc., and receipts from trading committees.

increase in the second period,¹ partly owing to the working of the formula, and partly because there had been an increase of Government money for the whole country in order to keep pace with the increase in rate expenditure, but extra temporary grants² to compensate for the delay in taking over the cost of the able-bodied unemployed were received in 1935-36 and 1936-37. In the second place Manchester, by means of its two Special Expenditure Committees,³ has enforced such economy in the various departments that expenditure from the rates in 1936-37 was only £44,730 greater than it was in 1928.

The third grant period, which began in 1937 and will end in 1941, has brought a further increase of grant of £119,000 a year to Manchester. This extra money comes with no conditions. In the first year, 1937-38, Manchester decided to use it to keep the rates at 15s. 6d. instead of relaxing the severe economy under which the spending departments have suffered for six years.

The fact that she has this choice brings out clearly the difference between the percentage and the block grant. Percentage grant has to be earned, that is to say, it is not paid until the expenditure has been incurred. The local authority has to show that it has spent the money before the Government department parts with its share. The block grant, calculated on factors beyond the control of the local authorities, is paid whether the authority makes any corresponding payment or not. The only conditions are that the health services are to be kept up to a reasonable standard. One of the arguments against the percentage grant is that a rich authority benefits from it much more than a poor authority. Manchester, it was said, can afford to spend more on her educational service than can Merthyr Tydvil; Manchester, therefore, receives more from the Government, although the needs of Merthyr Tydvil are greater. That is true but, apart from the fact that special—although not sufficient—provision has been made for the necessitous areas, Manchester had to find 50 per cent of the expenditure before she received the other 50 per cent grant. Under the block grant she receives her share irrespective of her expenditure.

¹ From £703,054 to £721,384.

² In 1932 and 1935.

³ £152,652.

III

TRADING PROFITS IN RELIEF OF RATES

Another way in which relief can come to the ratepayer is from profits of the trading departments. Gas was the first commercial undertaking by a public body in Manchester and, as we saw, from the beginning profits were made and used for improvements in the township of Manchester without, however, any legal sanction until 1824. From that day until 1921 controversy raged between those who wanted cheap gas—and later cheap electricity and tram fares—and those who wanted a higher charge to be made, and the profit to go in relief of rates. It was the controversy between direct and indirect taxation in the sphere of local government. Consumers held meetings, committees of the Council were appointed and contributions from the trading departments fixed, but the importance of cheap gas and electricity for smoke abatement, and of cheap transport for the workers, was more strongly urged after Labour members entered the Council. In 1920 the casting vote of the first Labour Lord Mayor¹ carried a resolution against the principle of profits in relief of rates. Since 1921 no contribution has been received from Gas and Transport, and only once from the Electricity Committee.

This question never arose with regard to either markets or water for exactly opposite reasons. In the case of the markets, the undertaking was definitely on a commercial basis. Those who rented stalls in the markets were carrying on ordinary business, and there was no reason why their rents should be fixed on any other basis than that of the highest that could be charged. By the Act of 1846 all receipts for stalls, etc., automatically went to the city fund. With regard to water, the necessity in the interests of health and sanitation of providing an abundant supply at the lowest cost was recognized by Parliament, and the Water Rate might only be high enough to meet the actual cost.

¹ Alderman Tom Fox.

IV

CONTROL OF EXPENDITURE

(a) *Audit*

Local authorities are only allowed to spend the rates on objects that are specified by Acts of Parliament. However much a Council may want to spend money on any project, and however unanimous it may be on the subject, it cannot do so unless the expenditure is authorized by any existing Acts of Parliament, or unless it goes through the lengthy and expensive process of procuring a private Act. Parliament may or may not grant the requisite powers; if it does, expenditure in that locality for the special purpose is legal, although no other authority can follow the example without procuring a private Act of its own.

The Municipal Corporations Act directed that two auditors, not members of the Council, should be elected by the ratepayers, and to these was added later a member of the Council appointed by the Mayor, called the Mayor's Auditor.¹

These auditors, who are not required to have any special qualifications, are able usually to give very little time to the work. They have no powers of surcharge but they exercised the only check upon the Council's expenditure until 1880 when the Council appointed a firm of accountants to assist the elective auditors.²

From that time until the present day professional auditors have audited the accounts of the Corporation, but if the Corporation liked, it need not have this audit. All that is prescribed by law is that the Mayor's and elective auditors shall be appointed.³

Audit of some of the Corporation's expenditure by various Government departments has been compulsory for many years.

The Poor Law Commissioners and the Poor Law Board audited the accounts of the Guardians and of the Overseers for rate collection from 1844. The Local Government Board carried on the work to which was added the audit of the School Board

¹ Local Government Act, 1882.

² On the motion of Councillor Windsor, who had been Mayor's Auditor in 1878.

³ County Boroughs and Boroughs are in a different position from County Councils and Urban District Councils.

in 1870. A proposal by the Government in 1877 that councils might ask for their funds to be audited in the same way, was so violently opposed by Manchester and other authorities that the clause was withdrawn. That position has been maintained, and to-day the only Corporation accounts audited by the district auditor are those that were previously under the other bodies, namely the Public Assistance Committee (successor of the Poor Law Guardians), the Education Committee (successor of the School Board), and the rate collection account of the Finance Committee (successor of the Overseers). The police accounts are only checked by the Home Office in order to see that the expenditure upon which it pays grant is approved. These accounts are not subject to the district auditors, nor are those of the other committees—although all are subject to audit by the professional auditors appointed by the Council.

Whether the office of elective auditor is worth keeping is extremely doubtful. In the days when “wineing and dining” occupied a more important part in local government than they do to-day, the fear of publicity, through the investigations of an energetic elective auditor such as Joseph Scott in 1885, may have exercised a salutary restraint.

But nowadays Councillors are themselves more vigilant, and there is no longer a “ruling clique” of senior Aldermen, ready to shield one another from public criticism in the matter of travelling expenses, cigars and wines. Charges made by the elective auditor against the Health Committee in 1886 proved, when an inquiry was held, to be completely unfounded, although certain irregularities in checking the men’s wages were pointed out. On another occasion, however, allegations made by an elective auditor against the Lord Mayor elect, resulted in an inquiry by a special committee which passed a vote of censure¹ on the Alderman, as a result of which he resigned from the Council.

No payments can be made by the Treasurer’s department until the items have been checked and signed by two members of the spending committee and by two members of the Finance Committee, after the sheets have been checked by the officials in the department of the spending committee and again by the officials of the Finance Committee.

For many years the Finance Committee only checked the accuracy of the items sent to it by other committees for payment; gradually, however, and especially in the last fifteen years, its control has been increased. It now conducts an internal audit over all the Corporation's accounts, except those of the trading committees and of the Education Committee, which all have their own internal audit.

A recommendation by the Parliamentary and General Purposes Committee that the office of elective auditor should be abolished was overwhelmingly defeated by the Council recently¹ on the ground that "ancient liberties" should be retained, but no arguments were adduced to prove their value.

(b) *The Finance Committee*

The Finance Committee has always managed the financial business of the Corporation and has raised the loans for the different departments.

Each loan is for a specific purpose, and the consent of a Government department is necessary before the money can be raised. The management of this loan debt, which involves settling rates of interest, and the periods for new loans and for renewal of old ones, is done at the weekly meeting of the Finance Committee. In 1937 the Corporation's debt amounted to £46,960,152, of which £22,000,000 was on account of the trading departments. Against this there were assets, not counting sewers or streets, of £78,500,000. The average rate of interest on the total debt, which rose to £4 17s. 8d. in 1922, is now £3 9s. per cent.

Every year the Finance Committee scrutinizes and passes the estimates of all the committees, and reports to the Council what rate will be necessary to meet the year's expenditure. It has, therefore, always been in a position to influence the policy of the Corporation, but since 1908 it has had the right to submit reports to the Council during the year on any proposal which involves capital expenditure.

Direct control of policy by the Finance Committee is jealously watched, and usually resented by the spending committees, so that

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, December 2, 1937.

since 1931 this control has been hidden behind a smoke screen of Special Expenditure committees.

Important as is the basis upon which rates are raised, the amount of the rates and the way in which their expenditure is controlled is of even greater importance. Gradually all the expenditure in the city has come under the control of the Council, that of the School Board in 1902 and that of the Poor Law Guardians in 1930. The Manchester Board of Overseers, the descendant of the Churchwardens and Overseers of the wealthy township of Manchester, was absorbed by its ancient enemy the City Council in 1925.

For many years, as we saw, the survival of the separate township spirit prevented complete financial control by the Council, and the development of the Finance Committee, as the committee to supervise the expenditure and the financial administration of the other committees, has been of slow growth. Each step towards this end has been opposed by the individual committees who, whilst feeling conscious as members of the Council of the necessity of keeping down the rates, naturally feel that the expenditure of their committee is such that it cannot be reduced without harm to the city. The distinction between *wasteful* expenditure, which is present whenever more money is being spent than is necessary to produce the desired result—desired by the committee itself—and *unnecessary* expenditure, about which agreement can very rarely be expected, is not clearly understood.

A good instance of "wasteful" expenditure was when the Cleansing Committee continued to use old-fashioned methods, i.e. horses instead of motor vehicles, so that it cost more to collect and dispose of the contents of the dustbins in Manchester than in Birmingham, and at the same time the streets were not so well cleansed. When the Committee changed its methods, a considerable reduction was made in the cleansing rate, at a time, too, when Wythenshawe had been added to the city and when development of housing estates entailed more work.¹ To carry out more work at less cost because of improved methods is a desirable saving, and a close scrutiny should always be maintained by the Finance

¹ In 1937 there was a saving of £73,880 per annum compared with the cost in 1931, although 21,000 extra premises and 91 extra mileage of streets had been added in the six years.

Committee of the comparative costs of other authorities to ensure that such savings are being made.

But the other form of expenditure that is often called "waste" is not necessarily so. For instance, Manchester spent in 1935-36 more per child in the elementary school than Liverpool or Birmingham, and one of the reasons was that Manchester has nursery classes for the under five's, the cost of which is higher than in the ordinary infants' school or babies' rooms. Although some people may consider it unnecessary to spend any money on children under five—since there is no compulsion to do so—others hold that this expenditure is more than justified by the increased well-being of the nursery-class children. Unless, therefore, it could be shown that Manchester was spending on these nursery classes more than is necessary to run them on the standard adopted, this extra cost per head cannot be called "wasteful."

Now, the several committees of the Council have been very loath to allow the Finance Committee to exercise any supervision of their affairs, even in order to avoid "waste," because they fear that this supervision might lead to interference with what they consider "necessary" expenditure, but which the Finance Committee, always keeping both eyes on the rates—instead of the one eye each committee has to keep—might consider "unnecessary." The problem of financial control has not yet been satisfactorily solved in Manchester. It is only since 1908 that the Finance Committee has submitted reports to the Council on all proposals for capital expenditure over £100. These proposals are sent to the Finance Committee and a report from it goes with the report from the committee concerned, to the Council. The Finance Committee's report is supposed merely to explain the effect on the rates of the proposal; it is not supposed to express an opinion on its desirability or otherwise, which would be to interfere with policy, but in practice it is, of course, impossible to separate these aspects. The stereotyped form of the Finance Committee's report contains the concluding sentence: "The Finance Committee approves of the proposal." If it feels that the amount involved is "wasteful" or even "unnecessary," it will refer the proposal back to the committee for reconsideration before it reports to the Council. It is not usual, although it does happen, that the Council will support a committee in expenditure that the Finance Committee

has reported against. But, because of the very strong feeling in the Council that the Finance Committee must not be allowed to control policy, that committee is very chary of turning down proposals, especially if they concern the social services, unless they can be clearly demonstrated to be "wasteful." A tightening up of standing orders in the last few years—periods of depression are useful to those who want to strengthen financial control!—has increased considerably the control by the Finance Committee, but the Council is still not prepared to give it full power to control, or even to co-ordinate policy.

Every year the estimates of each committee go to the Finance Committee, and are reported on by the City Treasurer, who has already scrutinized them in detail in conjunction with the financial officer of the department from which they come. Until a few years ago the practice was that if an increase of rates was anticipated, the Finance Committee sent a deputation to those committees that had not already reduced their estimates as much as it considered desirable, and asked them to consider the matter again. If they were still obdurate, the question was fought out in the Council and the Finance Committee usually won, because at the special meeting of the Council to pass the estimates, it is easy to frighten the Councillors with the fear of an increase of rates. The estimates of every committee are voted on separately, and it takes a brave Councillor to defy the Finance Committee and deliberately to vote for a proposal that will mean an increase of rates. The Councillors who are due to stand for re-election in the following November—the special meeting is in February—usually show less courage than those others who can reasonably hope with Mr. Micawber that "something will turn up" in the intervening twenty months to obliterate, in the eyes of their constituents, a vote that may have been responsible for increasing their rates. This constant struggle to keep down the rates proved so wearing, and often caused so much friction with other committees, that a proposal was made in the early part of 1931 to institute rationing. The expenditure had been increasing and showed every sign of continuing to increase. Manchester was still suffering severely from the slump which had affected her ever since 1921, although the national "crisis" was still several months ahead, and Mr. (now Sir) Noton Barclay who was, and is, one of the leading members of the Finance Committee

proposed a resolution¹ to limit the rate to 15s. for the next five years, and so instruct the Finance Committee to make the necessary recommendations to carry this into effect.

This resolution was not carried, neither was a proposal by the Conservative Party that the rate should be fixed then and there without any inquiry at 14s. 6d. for the next five years, but the Liberal and Labour parties combined to carry instead a resolution setting up a special committee of seven members to inquire into the expenditure of all departments of the Corporation with a view to finding out what economies were possible without reducing the efficiency of the essential services. The question of settling a maximum rate for a period of years was deferred until the report was received, and was, in fact, never again discussed.

The Council's suspicion of the Finance Committee was shown by the fact that the task of making the inquiry was given to a Special Committee. The chairman of the Finance Committee, the late Alderman Swales, was elected Chairman, and the Committee spent two and a half years in a thorough investigation, which was the first of the kind that had ever been carried out. The effect of this "spring cleaning" was as important as the final proposals of the Committee, for it made every department overhaul and explain to the Special Committee its work in detail. Statistics dealing with every side of each committee's work had previously been circulated to the members. The Expenditure Committee issued three reports dealing with all branches of the Corporation's work. It made proposals for the ensuing five years, which certainly helped to keep the rates at or below 15s. 6d.² It postponed to the end of the period many projects involving capital expenditure. It reduced current expenditure, sometimes settling the details itself, sometimes, as in the case of education and public health, agreeing with the committees the amount of their estimates for each of the five years, and leaving them the task of fitting in the expenditure. Finally, it proposed the setting up of a new General and Parliamentary Committee to which all projects involving capital expenditure should in future be referred. This was a recognition of the fact that the Council would never give such control to the Finance Committee.

¹ February 11, 1931.

² 1932 15s. 6d., 1933 15s. 6d., 1934 15s. 2d., 1935 15s. 2d.

The Special Expenditure Committee had been appointed to do a special piece of work for a period of slump, when rateable value showed signs of a decline. But fear of rising rates, when the end of the five years was in sight, induced the Council to reappoint¹ it to control the expenditure for another five years. Many of the schemes of capital expenditure which had been reluctantly postponed by the Committee in 1931 for five years, including a new art gallery, were again postponed for another five, and the system of rationing was repeated and extended although the end of the slump was in sight.

How long the Council will allow its expenditure to be controlled in this way is difficult to foresee. A measure that was accepted as necessary in the special circumstances in 1931 was again adopted even more easily in 1935, for this time there was a Labour Chairman of the Finance Committee, who lent his weight to the proposal. Although the second five-year period will not come to an end until 1941, there are signs that some of the committees are having great difficulties in keeping within their ration.

The result of this control has certainly been to keep the rates lower than if committees had continued each to expand its service, but it has meant stabilizing these services at a certain level, any advances in one section of a committee's work being only possible if equivalent savings are made in another. Assuming that something had to be done in 1931 to meet the situation, locally of a decline in rateable value, and nationally of a financial crisis, there was already, in 1935, an increase in rateable value, and nationally we are now supposed to be in a boom. For some unexplained reason the Council has adopted 15s. 6d.—the present rate—as a maximum, and has made the majority of the Council, Labour members as well as Conservatives, feel that any advance on this would be a disaster.²

One lesson that can clearly be learnt from a survey of the last hundred years is that rates have always been said to be too high. When they were 5s. and 6s. in the £, there were people, sometimes calling themselves ratepayers' associations, sometimes merely "economists," who predicted disaster to the city if the rates were allowed to increase. Yet the rates increased, and the city increased

¹ July 31, 1935.

² The rate for 1938-39 was fixed as we were going to press. In spite of valiant efforts by the Finance Committee it has risen to 16s.

also, in wealth and rateable value. In fact, it is true to say that if municipal expenditure had not increased in order to provide better sanitation, more health services, more and better education, the city would not have grown as it has, because essential conditions of growth would have been absent. With the scanty water supply of 1838, with the lack of properly paved and drained streets along which the cotton goods could be transported from canal and railway to warehouse and factory, without public health measures to prevent epidemics such as cholera—which has not been seen in the city since 1854—the large conglomerations of people which were necessary to the development of the trade and industry of Manchester, could never have lived and worked here. The less time lost through illness by the working men and women, their longer working lives, the number of clerks who can not only read, write and cypher, but are skilled in foreign languages, the managerial ability that has emerged from the schools, are all factors in the commercial development of Manchester. They have only been made possible by expenditure of public money, expenditure which has been hampered always by the cry for economy from those who were too short-sighted to see what expenditure produced real economies in the long run.

But, it will be said, there must be some figure beyond which rates can be said with truth to be too high. We suggest that there is no figure which can be laid down in advance as the figure which rates should not exceed. The principle adopted in local Acts a hundred years ago of putting a statutory limit on the rates, whether for watching and lighting, or repair of highways, has now been abandoned for all the services which are provided in Manchester.¹ Changes in the value of money, no less than the increasing realization of the value of communal expenditure, have abolished any legal limits.

Although it is true that rates have increased considerably since pre-war days, so also have the money incomes of the average rate-payers. It has been calculated for the country as a whole that an income of £160 in 1911 is equivalent to one of £250 in 1929.²

¹ There are still statutory restrictions on certain authorities for certain purposes, i.e. Local Authorities (Publicity) Act, 1931, s. 1 set a limit of 1d. rate for contributions to an advertising organization.

² *National Income and Outlay*, by Colin Clark, p. 115.

There was little difference between the years 1911 and 1913 or between 1929 and 1936. Assuming, then, that the average for the whole country is applicable to Manchester, and that the increase in assessments in Manchester is not greater than the increase in those of the country as a whole, a rate of 8s. 2d. in 1911 would be roughly equal to a rate of 13s. 9d. at to-day's values. Rates this year (1937) are 15s. 6d., a difference of 2s. 9d.¹

When the middle-aged ratepayer of to-day compares the municipal services with those provided before the war, he will realize how immensely they have grown. There was then no Maternity and Child Welfare Service, and the number of babies that died under one year of age was 133² compared with 77 per 1,000 born to-day. There was very little in the way of municipal housing—a few blocks of flats in Oldham Road and Rochdale Road, and the beginnings of the Blackley Estate. To-day there are over 27,400 municipal houses. There were then no school clinics, few maintenance allowances or University scholarships. Since the war extra parks have been provided at Chorlton, Fog Lane and Wythenshawe; playing-fields laid out and maintained in all the parks, excellent Public Health hospitals and better scales of Public Assistance relief provided. For the extra burden of 2s. 9d. in the £ which, on a house rated at £20 a year is an extra 1s. 3d. a week, the ratepayer will surely admit that he is getting good value. Of course the increase in rateable value and the increase in Government grants since 1911 have helped to provide the extra services, but we are here concerned with the ratepayer's "burden," which usually tends, we suggest, to be considered quite apart from what he gets for his payment.

It is difficult to get any proof of the statement that high rates are ruining the city, although it is, of course, true that when trade is bad the tenants of shops, offices and warehouses find rates, which are assessed regardless of profits, a heavier burden than when trade is good. Householders, too, whose salaries or wages may be reduced have naturally greater difficulty than in paying rates, just as they have greater difficulty in paying rent or in buying the food and clothing that their families need. It is in hard times, however, that many of the ratepayers need more than ever expenditure from the rates. More children have to be fed at school, more

¹ Including Poor Law in both years.

² Average for 1911-15.

expectant and nursing mothers need free and cheap milk, there are more people on Public Assistance, and so on.

The Second Expenditure Committee which adopted 15s. 6d. as the limit of the rate, said in its report:¹ "While it is impossible for anyone to say with certainty what is the maximum rate a community can afford to pay, it is common knowledge that the present rate burden is being severely felt by the citizens of Manchester, and, in view of the evidence of empty properties in the city, and the reluctance of new enterprises to enter heavily rated areas, it appears . . ."²

Our survey of the last hundred years enables us to say that in any year the statement "that the present rate burden is being severely felt by the citizens," would have been as true as it is to-day. The report, too, was written when trade in the city was on the up-grade. The 15s. 6d. rate of 1936 was almost certainly collected with less difficulty than was the 15s. 2d. of 1934, when there was little sign of returning prosperity. The number of "empties" is one indication of the state of trade in the city, but whether it is or is not increased by the height of the rates is another question. As a matter of fact, the number of empties in 1936 was considerably less than that of the previous year, when the rate was 4d. less. How far rates have kept new enterprises out of the city when productive enterprises, owing to derating, only pay 4s. 4d. in the £, is extremely problematical. The Expenditure Committee gave no instances.

We suggest that the only safe test of whether rates are too high is the ease or the difficulty with which the rate is collected. If, for instance, the number of cases which have to be excused on account of poverty, and the number against whom summonses have to be taken out, increased considerably when there was a large increase in the rate, and if there had been no change in administrative practice, there would be some grounds for saying that the rate was too high. Such evidence has never been offered because, we venture to suggest, it does not exist. If, on the other hand, it should turn out that there were more summonses in 1931, when the rate was 14s. 6d. and the number of assessments was 217,350, than in 1935 when the rate was 15s. 6d. and the number of assessments had increased to 228,309, that would surely be *prima facie* evidence that

¹ February 17, 1936.

² *Second Expenditure Report*, p. 347.

the state of trade had more to do with the difficulty of collection than the actual amount of the rate.¹

There is no doubt that uncertainty and fear of an unspecified rise is much worse than the knowledge that an extra 6d. or 1s. will have to be found. If the rates were fixed for a period of five or three years at a figure to allow a sufficient margin for new duties imposed by statute, for expansion according to a forecast programme, and for a rise in Public Assistance costs if trade conditions became worse, we believe the ratepayers would benefit. They would, we think, gladly surrender the hope each year of a reduction for the certainty that during the period fixed there would be no increase.

Although in theory there is much to be said for postponing capital expenditure and any possible increase of revenue expenditure from times of boom to times of slump, both to help to even out the curves and to avoid high prices, it is almost impossible to get such a system adopted by the Council. In times of slump the ratepayer feels the burden of the rates more severely, and it is just in these times that there is the strongest pressure—and pressure with which there is universal sympathy—to reduce rates, not to increase them. If in times of boom, money in addition to the ordinary revenue requirements could be raised and set aside for use in times of slump, it would undoubtedly be a good thing, but at present that is impossible without Parliamentary sanction.

An alternative to building up a reserve fund for use in a period of depression, might be the suspension of sinking fund payments during those years and the quicker acceleration of debt redemption in years of boom.

For the last seven years Manchester has followed a contrary policy. Since 1930 a 3d. rate (£73,000) has been levied annually to avoid debt charges on capital sums under £5,000—by paying for them out of revenue. The resolution authorizing this rate ended with the words: "If the expenditure on such schemes falls short of the equivalent of a 3d. rate, the balance . . . shall be applied to reduction of debt." Out of a total of £517,000 raised between 1930 and 1936, less than half, namely £245,000, has been spent on small items of capital expenditure, and £272,000 has gone in

¹ The percentage of the rate actually collected for the last four years was 91.7 for 1933 and 1934, 91.5 for 1935, and 91.6 per cent for 1936.

redemption of general debt charges. This means that during the last seven years, when the rates have been kept down by drastic rationing and control of expenditure, when every penny that it has been possible to squeeze out of the reluctant ratepayer could have been spent over and over again on urgent requirements, well over 1½d. rate each year has gone, not in saving future debt charges on small capital items, but in accelerating the reduction of general debt charges on large loans.

There is, as we suggested, much to be said for this policy in times of good trade if it carried with it the power to suspend sinking fund payments in times of slump. Although that would require legislation, Manchester could have so manipulated the 3d. rate as to achieve the same results. If, during the years 1930-34 she had only raised 1½d. rate, which would have been sufficient to pay for small items of capital expenditure, she could, for the later years when trade was improving, have levied the whole 3d. rate and spent half of it on quicker acceleration of debt charges. But the only form of financial planning of which the Council has so far given any sign is the purely negative one of postponing capital expenditure from one five-year period to another.

That rates are a bad tax is undeniable. They are levied on rent which is a fixed charge, whereas income tax on a business is only levied on profits, and an individual is allowed total or partial exemption if his income falls below certain amounts. In addition, he can claim allowances for dependants. Rates, on the other hand, are levied on houses, shops and offices, regardless of any "ability to pay." Thus a barrister making an income of several thousand pounds a year pays on the rent of his house and chambers only, perhaps, 1 or 2 per cent of his income in rates, whereas a father of a family earning £2 5s. a week, and paying 12s. a week rent, pays nearly 10 per cent of his income in rates. Of course, the barrister pays far more in income tax, but that is graded according to ability to pay. Thus, the argument that aid should come from the taxpayer towards the cost of services which, though locally administered, are of more than local importance, is re-enforced by the fact that income tax is much fairer in its incidence than are rates.

The fact that the ratepayer is getting excellent bargains through communal expenditure instead of having to pay separately for

cleansing and lighting the streets in front of his house, for school fees for his children, for parks to walk in and for books to read, is not fully realized. Unlike payments for food and clothing, payment of rates is not directly related to the benefits received, and many people take these for granted, whilst they grumble at having to satisfy the rate collector.

The question of rates is largely a psychological one. A sudden increase is bad and causes a violent reaction, but gradual increases are necessary and, in fact, the rise from 4s. in 1838 to 15s. 6d. in 1937 proves that an increase, concurrent with the rise in rateable value, has certainly not harmed the city. There is no reason to suppose that the process has suddenly come to an end, and in any case there is now a much greater realization than there was in 1838 of what can and should be done by public expenditure to improve the conditions under which the majority of citizens are still living.

If more publicity were given by the Council to the benefits that the ratepayers get through their rates, if easier methods of payment were encouraged, so that the sudden change experienced by many owners of new houses when, after paying rates with their rent each week as tenants, they are suddenly faced as owners with a demand for a year's rates all at once, were avoided, ratepayers would find their "burdens" easier to bear.

Looking back over the last hundred years, we can say without hesitation that if the policy of stabilizing the rate—which the Council has adopted since 1931—had been followed even for short periods in the past, the City would now be faced with the necessity for much greater expenditure to bring conditions up to the standard that public opinion demands. Each generation is at the same time inheritors of a past and trustees for a future. What we spend to-day—and what we save—affects the next generation, just as what our forefathers spent and what they did not spend affects ours. We must not shirk our part in the continuing process of evolving that civilized society which is the aim and object of municipal government. It is hardly fair to the ratepayers to hold out hopes which, looking back over the past, we now know are illusory. Although it is to be hoped and expected that more aid from Government sources will come to the rates, that new methods of rating may ensure a more equitable sharing of the cost, this only means that the taxpayer and the ratepayer between them—although in varying

proportions—must gradually get accustomed to paying a larger proportion of their income for public provision of services, both for themselves and for their fellow citizens.

RATEABLE VALUE 1839-1937

1839	..	..	669,954	1901	..	..	3,394,879
1841	..	..	830,582	1911	..	..	4,554,958
1851	..	..	1,025,872	1921	..	..	5,075,029
1861	..	..	1,231,241	1931	..	..	6,526,357
1871	..	..	1,703,627				(derating 1930)
1881	..	..	2,301,225	1937	..	..	6,661,545
1891	..	..	2,798,005				

POPULATION, RATEABLE VALUE AND RATES FROM 1916, WHEN MANCHESTER BECAME ONE RATING AUTHORITY, TO 1938

Year	Population ¹	Rateable Value	Rates
		£.	s. d.
1916-17	682,608	4,830,862	8 4
1917-18	660,143	4,855,191	8 4
1918-19	665,807	4,853,370	9 4
1919-20	741,068	4,841,922	11 10
1920-21	770,597	4,887,404	16 0
1921-22	744,000	6,793,151	15 0
	(census after adjustment)	(revaluation)	
1922-23	748,500	6,720,366	13 0
1923-24	752,100	6,552,347	12 0
1924-25	755,000	6,633,261	12 0
1925-26	755,800	6,674,681	12 2
1926-27	752,000	6,776,498	14 0
1927-28	751,900	6,918,576	13 6 ²
1928-29	755,900	7,015,912	13 4 ²
1929-30	746,500	7,047,079	13 0 ³
		(revaluation)	
1930-31	764,070	6,554,549	13 9
		(derating)	
1931-32	766,378	6,526,358	14 6
	(census)		

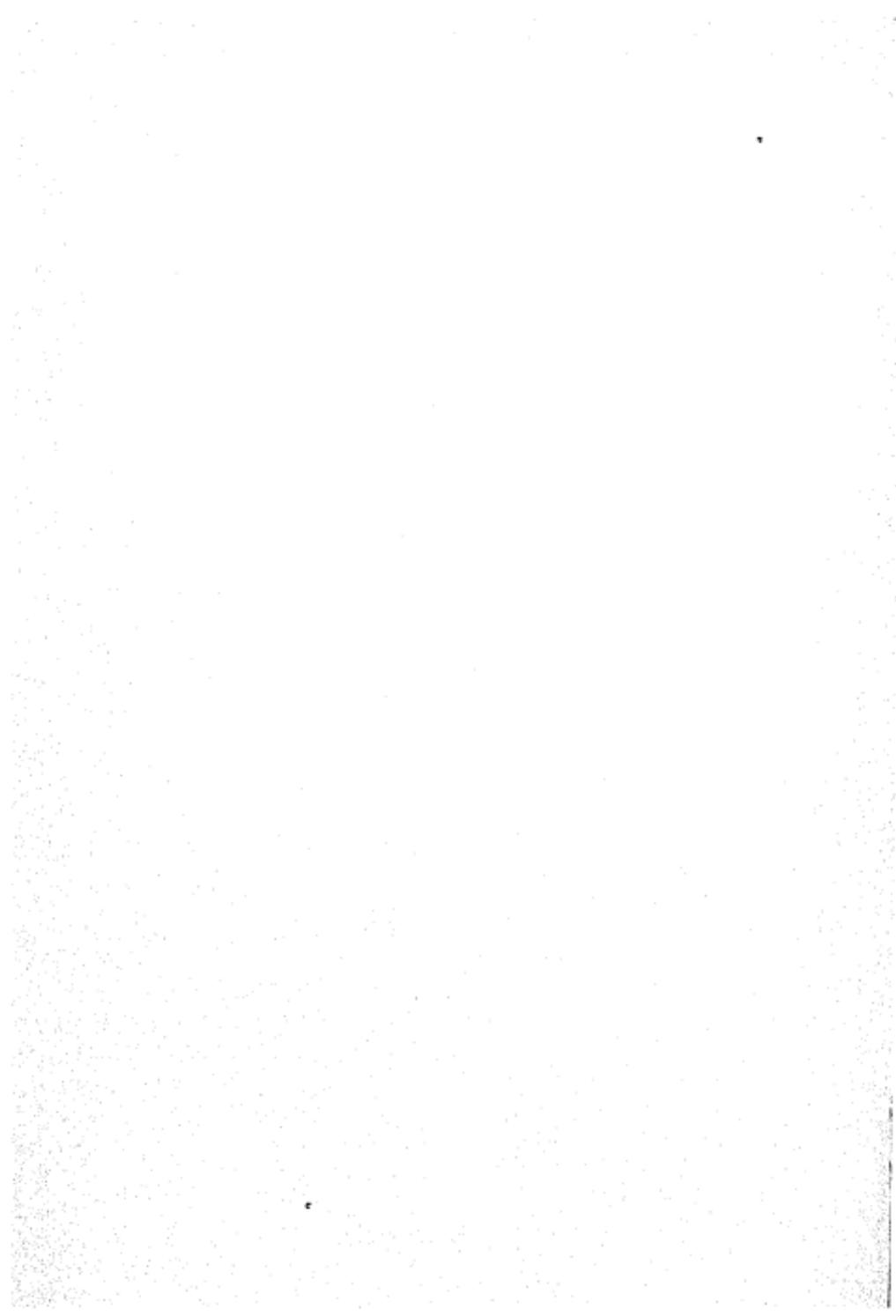
¹ For the years 1916 to 1936 the figure of population is that estimated by the Registrar-General. For the years 1930 and 1937 it is the estimate of the Medical Officer of Health.

² For a rating period of 11 months only.

Year	Population ¹	Rateable Value £	Rates s. d.
1932-33	763,000	6,530,243	15 6
1933-34	758,140	6,517,697	15 6
1934-35	754,600	6,645,042	15 2
		(revaluation)	
1935-36	748,100	6,694,312	15 2
1936-37	744,000	6,654,891	15 6
1937-38	751,371	6,661,545	15 6

¹ For the years 1916 to 1936 the figure of population is that estimated by the Registrar-General. For the years 1930 and 1937 it is the estimate of the Medical Officer of Health.

PART III



CHAPTER VI

PUBLIC HEALTH

INCLUDING MORTALITY RATES, MAIN DRAINAGE, CLEANING AND SCAVENGING, INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND HOSPITALS, TUBERCULOSIS, VENEREAL DISEASES, SMOKE ABATEMENT, MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE

IN order to trace the development of public health through the century, we have included in the chapter some services that are not under the control of the Public Health Committee,¹ and we have not dealt with others that are. Lack of space made it impossible to deal with every branch, and we have chosen those that illustrate—in Manchester—the development that was taking place all over the country in the same period. When the newly elected municipal councils first turned their attention to the problems inseparable from the accumulation of large masses of people in towns where nothing had replaced the primitive sanitation of the village, they felt that improvement of the environment was the first necessity.

Scientific knowledge of the diseases that ravaged a city like Manchester was almost non-existent. Vaccination gave a weapon against smallpox, but the method by which infection was borne in the case of cholera, typhus, typhoid, dysentery and those "miasmic" fevers which were thought to come from the damp climate, was unknown until the middle of our period. Isolation in cases of infectious disease was gradually secured and curative treatment of the individual, whether the sufferer from tuberculosis or the child, did not come about until the twentieth century. The importance of fresh air, and therefore of good houses, of exercise and recreation, and therefore of playing-fields, of personal hygiene

¹ The first Health Committee was appointed in 1868, some of the duties having previously been performed by the Nuisance Committee and the Building and Regulations Committee. In 1890 the Health Committee became the Sanitary Committee and the newly formed Cleansing Committee took over some of its work. In 1919 the name was again changed to Public Health Committee.

and proper feeding, and therefore of school nurses, health visitors and child welfare clinics, has only been recognized by the public in the last twenty-five years.

A hundred years ago Manchester had very little water, no main drainage, no scientific collection and disposal of refuse, no adequate accommodation for infectious or other diseases, no provision for the health of the children who died in such appalling numbers. Gradually she has acquired all the services, some in advance of, some behind, other towns. Apart from housing, she is now free with one exception to devote her public health activities to ensuring that every citizen shall live a healthy life to the full span of years. The exception is smoke abatement. Although Manchester tackled the problem early it is still far from being solved, but that is not entirely the fault of Manchester.

MORTALITY RATES

The mortality rates are the recognized index of the state of the public health. That being so, Manchester must have been an exceptionally unhealthy city even in the times when all cities were unhealthy, for she occupied a very bad place amongst the other large towns. She often had the highest death-rate of all and was almost always amongst the three worst. As we shall see, Manchester's bills of mortality were the subject of anxious inquiry and comment by her public-spirited citizens in the early part of our century; and later, after the first appointment was made in 1868, by successive Medical Officers of Health.

The Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths Act was passed in 1836 and the General Register Office was set up. The year 1838 appears to be the first for which an annual report was published, but in that and the two succeeding years no attempt seems to have been made to get out mortality *rates*, only to supply the numbers of deaths that occurred in certain districts.

For comparing Manchester's death-rate with that of other large towns, the first figures are in a table in the Registrar-General's Report for 1858 which gives the annual average death-rate over ten years (1841-51) for twenty large towns. A similar table appears in the 1868 report, taking us up to the year 1861, but unfortunately it is not repeated after that.

The figures for England, Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester are set out in the tables below:

*Average Annual Death-rate
per 1,000 in the 10 years:
1841-50*

England	...	22
Birmingham	...	26
Manchester	...	33
Liverpool	...	36

*Average Annual Rate of Mortality
per 1,000 in 10 years:
1851-60*

England	...	22
Birmingham	...	27
Manchester	...	31
Liverpool	...	33

For 1868, the year when a Medical Officer of Health was at last appointed for Manchester, the comparative mortality rates as given by the Registrar-General were: Birmingham, 25.4; Liverpool, 30.4; Manchester—the highest in the country—33.6. Thenceforward we can trace in the reports of the first Officer of Health and his successors, Manchester's death-rate slowly improving, though with frequent setbacks and reverions to a higher figure, as one sanitary reform after another was effected, until we come to the present century when the improvement becomes more persistent.

But before passing to the years after 1868, let us turn back to the 'forties and get from another angle sidelights on the Manchester death-rate—that is, from individual investigators and those early voluntary associations which were such a feature of the city's public life. That the incidence of death was highest in early childhood was noted: William Jones, writing in 1840,¹ showed that the percentage of deaths under four years of age was 44.46 for Manchester and 43.64 for Liverpool compared with Birmingham 41.08, London 38.13, and England and Wales 37.08.

The high death-rates not only of children but also of young adults in Manchester troubled the Statistical Society a little later. Their report on "The Annual Mortality Bills, 1840-1841" includes the following table:

TOWNSHIP OF MANCHESTER

Percentage of Total Deaths at Different Ages:

					1840
Under 1 year	...	...	...	...	26.50
All under 20 years	...	...	...	...	64.25
All 20 years and upwards	...	...	...	...	35.74

¹ Vital Statistics of Manchester, 1838-9.

The same report tells us that of 706 spinsters who died at ages 16 to 102 (!) in 1840-41, no less than 70.92 per cent were between the ages of 16 and 30.

A further illustration of the loss of child life is found in the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners in 1842.¹ "It is an appalling fact that, of all who are born of the labouring classes in Manchester, more than 57 per cent die before they attain five years; that is, before they can be engaged in factory labour, or in any other labour whatsoever."

As soon as Dr. Leigh became Officer of Health in 1868 he set himself to examine Manchester's "unenviable position as one of the most unhealthy towns in the kingdom." The pollution of the air by smoke and by foul effluvia from cesspools and middens, the lack of hospitals for infectious diseases and finally the effects of poverty were all regarded as contributory causes. In his annual report for 1874,² wishing to call attention to the sociological factors influencing the death-rate, he gives the comparison of deaths for children under five in a mixed population of rich and poor—poor predominating—compared with a selected group of well-to-do people. He found that the average percentage of deaths of children under five to the total deaths in Manchester for the five years 1869-73 inclusive was 47.6, but the average percentage of deaths at similar ages for the same period amongst families belonging to the Society of Friends was only 12.9.

In 1877 the mortality dropped to 25 per 1,000, and Dr. Leigh regarded this satisfactory result as due to the fact that some 40,000 pail closets now replaced the old middens and ash pits in the central districts.

In 1886 it was still nearly as high, 24.69, and would have been higher but for the extension of the city in 1885 to include the healthier districts of Rusholme, Harpurhey and Bradford. In this year Dr. Leigh calls attention to the higher incidence of deaths in the poorer districts. Ancoats had the highest mortality rate—24.4, while Beswick was 22.0, St. George's 21.8 and Hulme 21.3. Of the newly-incorporated districts, Rusholme, then a high-class residential suburb, had a mortality rate of 11.0 per thousand;

¹ Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain, 1842, p. 158.

² City Council Minutes, April 1, 1874.

Harpurhey was considerably higher, 18·1, and Bradford higher still, 20·1.

Dr. Niven¹ comments in his report for 1898 on the position of Manchester's death-rate—24·80—amongst the thirty-three great towns, only two, Liverpool and Salford, having a higher figure. "*Manchester's high death-rate*," he says, "*still awaits explanation.*"

The beginning of the twentieth century brought new developments when the discovery was made that the death-rate of infants under one year of age was not falling, and that the problem must be tackled otherwise than by environmental improvement. The Registrar-General commented on this fact as follows:

"In the course of the forty years ended in 1900 the corrected death-rate at all ages had fallen by about 15 per cent,² but no such corresponding reduction could be recorded in the proportion of deaths of children under one year, the average ratio to the total births having been fairly constant in each decennium."³

The story of how public health administration in Manchester gradually took the child under five in hand and later the victim of tuberculosis is related elsewhere in this chapter. Meanwhile, in addition, many environmental improvements were going on, housing and smoke abatement, however, lagging behind the rest.

Let us look again at the Manchester death-rates, summarizing Table 1 in the Appendix. The general death-rate for the year 1900 was exceptionally high (27·4). The average death-rate over the five years' period 1896–1900 was 22·7; for the next five years' period 1901–5 it was 20·1 and had dropped to 17·7 in the following quinquennium.⁴ Over the next two quinquennia there was a substantial drop to 13·9 and 13·8 respectively. Twice only has the Manchester death-rate fallen below 13; it seems to fluctuate just above that figure as will be seen from the table for the last five years:

¹ He succeeded Dr. Tatham as Medical Officer of Health 1894–1922. His early reports were regarded as classical treatises on Public Health administration, and were greatly in demand by other medical officers.

² The reference is to England and Wales as a whole. Manchester could not claim a reduction as large.

³ Annual Report of the Registrar-General, 1907.

⁴ The city was extended to include Moss Side and Withington in November 1904, Gorton and Levenshulme in November 1909, and Wythenshawe April 1931. The inclusion of healthier suburban districts would be reflected in a lower death-rate for the city as a whole.

Year	General Death-rate				
1932	13·0
1933	13·4
1934	12·2
1935	12·9
1936	13·5

The infant death-rate, which was 188 per thousand born for the year 1900 and an average of 192 for the five years' period 1896-1900, began to show a substantial reduction in the new century. The annual average for the five years 1901-5 was 173, and there was a sharp decline to 147 in the next five years. By 1925 it was down to 95, that is, just under half the figure at the close of the nineteenth century. The rates for the last five years are set out below and show a tendency to rise after a highly satisfactory drop in 1934.

It might be interesting once more to compare Manchester with Liverpool and Birmingham. Taking the last five years, their mortality rates are as follows:

DEATH-RATES IN:

	MANCHESTER		LIVERPOOL		BIRMINGHAM	
	General	Infant	General	Infant	General	Infant
1932	..	13·0	85	13·2	91	11·2
1933	..	13·4	75	14·4	98	average
1934	..	12·2	69	13·1	81	1931-35
1935	..	12·9	71	13·1	83	10·9
1936	..	13·5	77	12·9	75	64
					11·3	62

It will be seen that over the last five years Liverpool has had a higher mortality rate, both general and infantile, than Manchester's, while Birmingham has, as hitherto, considerably lower figures.

One other comparison in the matter of death-rates remains to

be made—not Manchester in comparison with other towns, but one part of Manchester with another. It has already been shown that quite early attention was called to the higher death-rates in the poorer parts of the city. In spite of all that has been done, and in the last thirty years in particular, it still remains true that the wards in the inner ring, where the poorer people live, have higher death-rates than the suburban wards where the middle-class predominates.

Year 1936

Ward	General Death-rate	Infant Mortality
Inner Ring:		
All Saints	17.57	110
Medlock-street	14.46	92
New Cross	20.66	92
Suburban:		
Chorlton-cum-Hardy ..	11.06	77
Didsbury	10.33	43
Withington	9.08	54

MAIN DRAINAGE

Nowadays when a builder wishes to erect houses his first step is to inquire from the Corporation whether it will be possible to connect drains from his houses into the main drain. The question of the number of the houses, the lie of the land, and the capacity of the sewers, have all to be settled before he is given permission to proceed. It is then his duty to make the drains from the houses connecting with the main sewers. Before any of his houses can be lived in, he has to receive a certificate of habitation from the City Architect. These certificates are granted before the road is finally paved—which may not be done until years afterwards—but they cannot be given until the sanitary arrangements are satisfactory. A hundred years ago there were no such regulations and, although there were provisions in local Acts making the owner responsible

—as he still is—for paving and draining the road opposite his house, none of this work was done until after the house had been built.

"All around Manchester and Liverpool, houses are springing up on undrained land, some of it actually saturated with moisture, and a great part in that wet and unhealthy state indicated by the growth of rushes. The Acts do not contemplate these new accessions to towns, and do not recognize their existence until they have been for a considerable time exposed to all the evils which spring up with the buildings themselves."¹

It took over sixty years for the Town Council to provide a satisfactory main drainage system, and excellent though our system now is, we were far behind other cities in realizing the necessity in the interests of health of a proper method of sewage disposal. The story of these sixty years is not very creditable to our forefathers.

The system in force, not only in Manchester, but in most of the towns in the north, where coal, being cheap, was largely used by working-class households, was the privy midden system with an ashpit. Sometimes adjoining the cottage wall, at best in a small back yard, a rough wooden seat was erected over a pit, into which ashes were thrown from the side, the idea being that they disinfected the excrement and did not injure its manurial properties. In very few cases was there a separate privy and ashpit for each house, nor was there always a separate ashpit for each privy. Sometimes, in a court containing many dwellings, there would be three or four privy middens with a common ashpit. These middens, which were not emptied at regular intervals, soon became not only loathsome to sight and smell, but hotbeds of infection for the surrounding houses closely packed with human beings. These middens were usually over-full before they were emptied, and the emptying process, as can easily be imagined, was far from complete or cleanly. Much of the contents were spilled about the yard or street, and after a few years the soil surrounding the middens became thoroughly polluted. Before a pure water supply was brought from Longdendale, many of the wells and springs from which the people drew their water were polluted in

¹ "State of Large Towns," Part II, Appendix. *Report on Sanitary Conditions, 1845*, by Dr. Lyon Playfair, p. 45.

this way, and the cholera epidemics of 1831 and 1849 were largely due to this cause.

Although, as we shall see,¹ improvements were made in the primitive sanitary arrangements by the erection of more privies and ash pits, the drains from the streets and from the houses ran into the rivers, so that they became open sewers. There was no control over the rivers, and each manufacturer whose mill bounded the Medlock or the Irk dammed it up as he liked. This meant that at certain times the rivers overflowed their banks and brought all the filth into the streets and into the houses of those parts of the town.

We owe most of our knowledge of sanitary conditions in Manchester in the 'fifties to a series of reports by Robert Rawlinson, a civil engineer who was employed by the Government. Until 1888 outside the boroughs there was no organization other than that of the parish or township, and neither of these authorities had any sanitary powers. The Public Health Act of 1848 empowered a township to apply to set up a Board of Health, which then had the power to levy a rate. When an application was received, the Government sent down a Commissioner to hold an inquiry in the district. Those who wished to set up a Board, and those who objected, both gave evidence. The Commissioner then made his report to the Government, who took the decision. The procedure was very similar to that under which the Ministry of Health now holds Town Planning and other inquiries.

Various townships on the outskirts of Manchester and Salford—Newton Heath, Pendleton, Broughton, Altrincham—all applied for Boards of Health between 1850 and 1852, and Robert Rawlinson held inquiries and made reports on each of them.

He was a man who held somewhat advanced views about drainage for his time, and although he had no opportunity of inquiring into the drainage of Manchester directly, most of the townships were in the drainage area of Manchester and Salford, and he took the opportunity in each of his reports to deal with the problem as a whole.

In no measured terms he attacked the existing system, which he called one consisting of "a rude and most imperfect description of cesspool." Manchester had many excellent drains, but no inter-

¹ See below, p. 288.

cepting sewers,¹ so that all the refuse drained into the rivers—the Irwell, Medlock, Irk and Cornbrook. "They are not rivers of water, but rivers of sewage, refuse, of great value as manure, if properly applied to the land, but festering and fermenting in the foul streams, they are most disgusting to sight and smell and most pernicious to health. For many miles in length there is death in the evaporation from the sluggish semi-liquid refuse."² "Parties are living," he says in another report, "who have fished in the Irwell, but now, all these river courses pass, not water, but liquid refuse, fetid and loathsome to sight, the exhalations from which are most dangerous to health. . . . Natural watercourses cannot, with impunity to the unfortunate residents near, be converted into huge cesspools or sewers."³

Since 1851 a good supply of water was being brought to the town, and all the better-class houses in the suburbs were fast installing water closets. This only aggravated the evil. "The house drains of the suburbs on all sides pass into cesspools; or out into the nearest streams, watercourses or ditches, many of which are small, shallow or sluggish at all times, so that in summer evaporation taints the atmosphere of the whole district. . . . An improved and increased water supply, with extended house drainage, will only add virulence to the existing evil."⁴ "The filthy condition of the Irk and the Irwell, the Cornbrook and the Canal is most disgusting in dry weather, the entire volume of these streams is one mass of fermenting corruption from 15 or 20 miles down their course. The water above and in Manchester is used by bleachers, printers and dyers, the refuse from which works is passed into streams. In Manchester, the water thus tainted is further used for condensing and other purposes in steam engines and is discharged heated, back into the open or covered watercourses, which also receive the drainage of this large town, so that a semi-liquid compound is formed, an accurate idea of which no written description can convey. A thick scum coats the surface, upon and over which birds can walk; the putrid carcasses of dead animals, dogs, cats, etc., float and rot in the midst; fermentation takes place rapidly, as

¹ That is a sewer that collected the drainage and carried it away before it could pollute the rivers.

² *Report on Newton Heath*, by R. Rawlinson, 1852, p. 23.

³ *Report on Altrincham*, by R. Rawlinson, 1851, p. 16.

⁴ *Report on Pendleton*, by R. Rawlinson, 1851, p. 16.

large bubbles of gas may be seen escaping, and a thick vapour hangs over the entire area."¹

It is difficult for us, with our modern system of drainage and of collection of rubbish, to realize the situation when most of the refuse—except that imperfectly collected by the night-soil men of the Corporation, which could immediately be sold as manure, for there was then no method of treating it—went into the rivers. All the house drains, all the street drains—which received much of the contents of the middens and cesspools from the larger houses—all the tins, bottles, boxes, paper, dead cats, dogs, etc., all the trade refuse from the slaughter-houses, markets, mills, shops, except that collected by the bellcarts in the township of Manchester, everything went into the rivers. Nobody in Manchester at that time realized the importance of outlet or intercepting sewers. Rawlinson said: "The question of outlet sewers is one of the first importance in every case of town drainage, because it is the test by which the value of the whole of the secondary works must be tried. Any system of sewerage deficient in this main feature is not only imperfect as regards the works, but in a case of things in many aspects very much worse than if no sewerage or drainage existed. Take the present condition of Manchester and Salford as an example, and it will be found that the inhabitants bordering the rivers Irwell, Irk, Medlock, the Cornbrook and the Bridgewater Canal are, by the sewage of these two populous towns poured out into these rivers and watercourses, placed in much worse sanitary condition than if no sewerage existed; and every so-called improvement of a secondary character will but add to the already enormous evil. The cost paid by the unfortunate landlords and the owners of house and other property on the lines of districts so abused is depreciation of value to an extent which would more than construct the necessary works. The penalty paid by the wretched inhabitants, compelled from force of circumstances over which they have no control, to take their abode here is an undue amount of misery, sickness, fever, cholera and premature death. The punishment recoils back upon the general community in the form of excessive sickness and death at all times, but more observable in epidemic seasons, in largely increased poor's rates to maintain widowhood, orphaned and enfeebled paupers, and to relieve vagrants. . . . It is a costly

¹ *Report on Altrincham*, by R. Rawlinson, 1851, pp. 22-23.

and fatal mistake to consider that any town is in a good sanitary condition, or that it is properly regulated, because there are wide thoroughfares, main streets well paved and regularly cleansed, large warehouses, active guardians, numerous relieving officers, costly gaols, and an efficient police force, these are all secondary arrangements, and should be so considered."¹

He estimated that a series of intercepting sewers to discharge their contents on unoccupied land beyond the city where it would be rendered innocuous by air and sun, would cost a sum of £100,000, or £5,000 a year. Some of this cost at least could be recovered by the sale of manure, and he said that the collection of night-soil alone then cost the ratepayers of Manchester and Salford that amount. He pointed out the great advantage of water carriage over privies and middens, and explained that this system should be supplemented by the collection of solid refuse and ashes from each house once a week.

The problem of drainage was not confined to Manchester and Salford. All the rivers were already polluted by towns on their banks before they arrived in Manchester. He quoted the Registrar-General as saying, in reference to the high death-rate from this cause in Lancashire, "What then is wanted? Apparently only this one thing, that the leading men of Lancashire, animated by goodwill, should apply that skill and vigour which have been so successful in the use of machinery, and the production of clothing of mankind, to the amelioration of the social condition of the two millions of Englishmen around them."²

But although, as he stated, local authorities realized that this work was necessary, nothing was done. Manchester's only contribution to the problem at this time was to inflict a penalty upon anyone who permitted a water closet to empty into the River Medlock. A few years after this series of reports had been issued, instead of tackling the problem boldly, Manchester sought powers in a Waterworks Act³ to charge 10s. a year for every water closet in houses rented under £30, which would have included all the working-class houses in the city. She wished to do this, she said, as "the consequences of the general adoption of water closets

¹ *Report on Pendleton*, by R. Rawlinson, pp. 38-39.

² Quoted in R. Rawlinson's *Report on Newton Heath*, 1852, p. 17.

³ Manchester Corporation Waterworks Act, 1858.

would be that the state of the rivers would be insufferable, that an enormous waste of water would arise, and, in the opinion of the Council, the present sanitary condition of this City would be most seriously deteriorated and a very large additional charge would be imposed upon the inhabitants." Water closets meant new house drains because the existing ones were too small to allow for flushing, and more water than could be provided by the Longendale Works.

But the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association¹ now entered the lists. It sent a deputation to the Parliamentary Committee, and got not only Robert Rawlinson, but Edwin Chadwick, of Poor Law and Public Health fame, to give evidence against this clause. Chadwick explained that as a native of Longsight, he took a considerable interest in the city. Both he and Rawlinson urged the institution of water carriage and a proper treatment of sewage. Much to the annoyance of the Corporation, and in spite of the efforts of the Town Clerk to prove that the privy midden system was both sanitary and cheap,² these representations won and the high charge was not allowed.³

Still nothing was done. The position in England with regard to main drainage was not very advanced. Towns like Liverpool which could drain into the sea had little difficulty, but the Thames, which had been grossly polluted by the drains from London, had only introduced a system of sewage treatment that year, 1858.

In 1863 a Committee was appointed by the Council to consider the question of the River Medlock. This Committee became later the Rivers Committee, the euphemistic title by which our main drainage committee has ever since been known. In addition to the annually increasing pollution of the Medlock, the amount of solid refuse continuously cast into it silted up the bed and increased the risks from floods. It also suffered from the uncontrollable action of riparian owners, who dammed it up and let it loose again to suit their own convenience with no consideration for others.

Powers⁴ were acquired to build protecting walls and to prohibit pollution by any matter whatsoever. There seem to have been no prosecutions under these Acts. Alderman Hopkinson—on whose

¹ Formed in 1852.

² Appendix to Council Minutes, September 1, 1858.

³ There was a shortage of water in the city until the Thirlmere works were finished.

⁴ Manchester Corporation Acts, 1865, 1869, 1871.

initiative the Rivers Committee had been formed—stated that “the powers have been resolutely applied with gentle constant pressure, preventing irritation or resistance. The stronger the known power possessed by the authority, the less need for its application.”¹ This rosy view of the situation was not held by outside experts, and the Royal Commission appointed in 1867 to inquire into River Pollution, which had the indefatigable Mr. Rawlinson as its secretary, announced its intention of visiting Manchester.

After the Commission had been and taken evidence, they wrote to the Council for further information. In reply, the Council did not confine itself to the matter of drainage, but explained various of its other activities, by which means it apparently hoped to distract attention from its drainage deficiencies. It referred to Alexandra Park, the cemeteries, the local town halls, the markets and the waterworks. In reply to a leading question about especially unhealthy areas in the city, it had another answer: it said that areas such as Deansgate, St. George's, St. Michael's and Rochdale Road were the most unhealthy, and the state of such districts arose, no doubt, to a considerable extent, from the nature and character of the population, and from their filthy and dissolute habits, and also from the overcrowding of their dwellings. When it could no longer evade the direct question as to whether sickness was attributed to the existence of privy middens and ash pits, it replied ironically that there were differences of opinion, “which are expressed by gentlemen who take an interest in sanitary questions”²—a reference to the Sanitary Association which had given evidence when the Commissioners were in the city. Then, as now, Manchester was ready to resent criticism from an outside authority.

It was just about this time that the Social Science Congress met in Manchester and talked in very uncomplimentary terms of Manchester's death-rate and housing conditions. A Medical Officer of Health had, largely owing to pressure from without, just been appointed.³ Out of the 67,000 dwelling-houses in the city, there were 10,000 water closets and 38,000 privies, and the Corporation, from a mistaken idea of economy, obstinately stuck to its preference for the latter system. Even so, 28 per cent of the houses had no separate privy.

¹ Memo. by Alderman Hopkinson: lent by Miss Hopkinson.

² Council Minutes, December 2, 1868.

³ See above, p. 165.

There had been no immediate result from the Royal Commission on River Pollution and when Sir Joseph Heron gave evidence before the Sanitary Commission (1871), he reiterated his opinion that privies and ash-pits properly constructed were the best system for Manchester under the circumstances; that if all the 38,000 privies were turned into water closets the rivers would become abominable; that there was not enough water for water closets; and that until a satisfactory system of sewage disposal was found, the only thing was to keep out of the sewers as much fetid matter as possible. That could be achieved, he held, by the Corporation having the right to empty the privies. He was evidently satisfied, as he said, that sewage irrigation on to the land was impossible for Manchester, and that it would cost £1,000,000 to take it to the sea.

In view of the fact that Salford began to construct an intercepting sewer in 1872, and that Leeds had a system of sewage treatment in 1874, it is difficult to believe that Heron was justified in this attitude, although it is true that there was not, at that date, complete agreement between experts as to the advantages of water carriage with intercepting sewers. The privy midden system was common to most industrial towns because (owing to the cheapness of coal) ashes, which were supposed to disinfect the refuse, were plentiful. The argument that the working classes could not be trusted to keep water closets in order was also brought forward, and we recognize it as the forerunner of the one familiar to us, that baths in cottages are unnecessary as they would only be used for the storage of coal. At this time, too, there was no accepted method of treatment of sewage beyond that of spreading it on the land. But it is clear that the Town Clerk, in defending the privy midden system, was influenced more by the expense that would be involved in providing the extra water than by the excellence of the system which, he had to admit before the House of Commons Committee in 1858, meant that approximately one and a half tons of refuse from every house was removed on the average only twice a year. The Waterworks at Longdendale had only been working since 1851, and already, owing to the growth of the population and of the trade of the district, the demand was heavier than the experts had calculated, but it was not until 1875¹ that the Corporation was prepared to consider a supply from the Lake District. The Medical

¹ See below, p. 353.

Officer of Health, Dr. Leigh, appointed in 1868, was genuinely perturbed by the high death-rate and by the horrible insanitary system of privy middens. In one of his early reports he tried to get the Council to realize the situation by imagining that all the middens of the city were concentrated in one area. They would make, he calculated, a lake sixteen times the size of St. Ann's Square and five feet deep. Those middens were not emptied at any regular times, but when they were full, a note was sent to the Town Hall and men were sent to empty them. Although the stench from these middens was almost insufferable, the inhabitants only complained when they were full! After he had made an unsuccessful attempt to ventilate ash pits, and to use a cinder-sifter system, he thought that he had found a solution of the problem in the substitution of pail closets for privies, and in the filling-in of cesspools. Thus, in 1872, started the "Dolly Varden"¹ era in Manchester, an advance on privy middens, but much inferior to water carriage. Long, low carts with a dozen compartments collected the pails from the houses, and as they were drawn slowly through the streets, sometimes three together, the stench was nauseating.

It seems curious that Dr. Leigh did not urge the importance of a main drainage system. Perhaps the fact that he was a resident of Manchester and had no experience of methods of other cities made him somewhat conservative. It is only fair, too, to say that fifteen years later other medical men also were in favour of the dry closet system. But other officials were more far-sighted. The Borough Engineer and Surveyor at this time, A. M. Fowler, was in favour of water closets and intercepting sewers to carry the sewage to works where it could be treated, and he reported what was being done at Leeds. As the chief argument against a universal system of water closets was shortage of water, he proposed to utilize for the water closets waste water from the house and rain water from the roofs. This system, he said, was in use in a part of Salford.²

The City Analyst also seems to have realized the importance of the problem. "Although," he wrote, "the total cost of the cure may at first appear great, it behoves Manchester to look as carefully to

¹ The name of a popular scent of the time used ironically.

² Paper read to the Scientific and Mechanical Society, Manchester, on the "Utilization of the Town's Sewage," 1876.

the future sanitary requirements of a city, which may number a million, as she has already done in providing for other requirements, by her new Town Hall and gigantic water scheme."¹

The policy of the substitution of pail closets for privies, which was forced upon owners of property, caused much opposition in the Council. It was done at the owners' expense, but they could pay over a period of seven years. From 1877 the Corporation contributed £1 per closet. The total cost was about £3. It was being carried on at the same time as the more drastic reconditioning of houses under the 1867 Act, and the Health Committee was continually criticized and obstructed in its policy. But it persisted, and after eight years (1881) 60,000 pail closets had been installed. As the total number of houses was now 72,504, this showed that there had been little increase in water closets, which in 1868 had numbered 10,000.

The substitution of pail closets was afterwards described as "next to the provision of an abundant and pure water supply, the greatest sanitary achievement ever effected in Manchester,"² and undoubtedly it was a great improvement on privy middens, but it still left the polluted soil under the houses, and even pail closets added to the pollution if not regularly emptied. The great advantage of this system was that pail closets had to be emptied more frequently than middens.

Two Acts of Parliament, the Public Health Act of 1875, which put the responsibility for providing proper drains upon the owners of property, and the Rivers Pollution Act of 1876—the result of the Royal Commission of 1867—brought the matter again before the Manchester authorities. Salford also, which suffered from the pollution of the Irwell as much as did Manchester, and which had already begun its own intercepting sewer, raised the question. In 1876 the Rivers Committee received a report from its officials recommending an intercepting sewer to Davyhulme, where it was proposed to acquire land for sewage disposal.

The Rivers Pollution Act³ made it an offence for sewage to be passed into the rivers unless it could be shown that the best prac-

¹ City Council Minutes, February 2, 1879.

² Report of the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Tatham, 1891.

³ The administration of this Act was given to the River Medlock Committee, and as more than one river was now concerned, the name was changed to the Rivers Committee.

ticable and available means to render it harmless were being used. Manchester realized that she could not claim exemption unless she altered her system, and could not prosecute other authorities which were polluting her rivers higher up so long as she continued to pollute them lower down. Also, the cost of a main drainage scheme to Manchester would be reduced if the surrounding local authorities could be induced to pay their share.

A Conference¹ of fifteen authorities—including nine that were eventually included in the area of Manchester—was called, and met at the Town Hall in 1878. It agreed to obtain a plan of a sewage scheme, the cost to be apportioned according to the amount of sewage contributed by each authority. The City Analyst, as we saw, sent in a report with a strong recommendation for action. The cost worked out at about £560,000, of which Manchester would pay rather over half. When, however, their contributions were made known to the other local authorities, they all withdrew from the scheme. Manchester did not feel inclined to go on alone, and nothing more was heard of the matter for several years, during which time the Rivers Committee said that they had been considering a scheme for the city alone.

Egged on by the Local Government Board, the Committee visited other towns—including Salford—and at last produced a scheme which was estimated to cost £500,000. It was practically the same as the original one of ten years earlier, and included the purchase of land at Davyhulme for sewage treatment. The Council still delayed, and it was only in 1889 that approval was finally given. A part of this scheme was carried out in 1894.

Meanwhile, Dr. Leigh had been succeeded by Dr. Tatham in 1888. Formerly Medical Officer of Health of Salford, he had been accustomed in that more enterprising city to a system of water drainage, and he was anxious to get it installed in Manchester. At his suggestion the Unhealthy Dwellings Committee visited Burnley and Leeds, and recommended that, in view of the new sewage system, water closets should be installed in all houses. Power to insist on this in new houses was taken in 1891,² but owing to the opposition by property owners the case of existing buildings was held up for five years,³ and only went through the Council then

¹ November 12, 1878.

² Manchester Corporation Act, 1891.

³ Under the Manchester Waterworks Act, 1867, 1869, and Manchester Order, 1881.

because the Corporation undertook to contribute £2 10s.¹ towards the cost of the conversion which, with the inclusion of house drains, amounted to £10 a house. As the Corporation had only just finished forcing property owners to convert from privy middens to pail closets, this provision was not only expedient but fair. But that did not prevent violent opposition from property owners, who managed to hold up the conversion scheme for at least ten years more.

Meanwhile, the extensions of the city in 1885 and 1890 necessitated an enlargement of the drainage scheme. A new factor had also appeared to complicate the problem, and that was the Ship Canal, which objected to the discharge of sewage very imperfectly treated. The Committee now found that a complete scheme would cost over £1,000,000 instead of £560,000 as originally estimated. At that time Manchester was spending much less per head of the population on sewage than Birmingham, Wolverhampton or even Bury.²

There now ensued a period during which the Council, the Local Government Board and the ratepayers contested the advantages of rival systems of sewage disposal, but the Local Government Board won by refusing to grant borrowing powers for any scheme unless a really satisfactory one was adopted. Meanwhile, the Mersey and Irwell Joint Board, of which Manchester was a member, had summoned the city for pollution of the Ship Canal, and the Stipendiary Magistrate, in imposing a fine, threatened to increase it at the rate of £50 a day if nothing was done. Even the "economists" in the Council now realized that further opposition would be wild extravagance, and the first instalment of thirty-six acres of bacteria beds and twenty-six acres of storm water filters at Davyhulme was completed in 1904. At last Manchester had a satisfactory drainage system. In 1911, when the city had again been extended, a second main drainage system was planned and approved. This second scheme is only just completed. It is calculated to serve not only the city, but a population of 1½ millions, and a drainage area of 39,000 acres until 1960 at least. The system of activated sludge process is considered one of the best in existence.³

¹ It is interesting to know that there was no statutory authority in Manchester for this contribution nor for the earlier one for the conversion from privy middens to pail closets.

² Council Minutes, September 5, 1900.

³ *The City of Manchester*, 1936, p. 105.

Dr. Niven, who succeeded Dr. Tatham as Medical Officer of Health in 1893, was convinced that the death-rate of Manchester, which gave the city an unenviably high place amongst the big towns, was largely due to the lack of water carriage. There was still a great number of privy middens in the suburbs, and the pail closet also, in his opinion, caused an excessive pollution of the soil. Once a really satisfactory system of main drainage was installed, conversion to water closets could be pushed forward. But in 1902, out of a total of 151,471 sanitary conveniences, only 45,686, or 37 per cent, were water closets.¹ A particularly energetic Sanitary Inspector, W. Stansfield, worked out and carried through an ambitious conversion programme at the rate of about 10,000 a year, and by 1917 pail closets and privy middens were entirely abolished. A few years before the work was practically finished, the Council decided to discontinue its contribution to the cost of conversion.

How far the high death-rate of Manchester—higher than that of other industrial towns—was due to its defective sanitary arrangements can never be really determined. It is enough for us that all three Medical Officers of Health were convinced that there was a close connection between the two.

The story of main drainage in Manchester does not reflect credit on the Council. That one of the richest cities in England and one of the largest, should have been behind much smaller towns like Salford and Leeds, in tackling a prime necessity for health, speaks little for the foresight or even for the humanity of our forefathers. But if the story is depressing, it points the moral closely. It was an outstanding case of "penny wise and pound foolish policy." Even if we admit that the system of main drainage recommended by Robert Rawlinson in 1850, and estimated to cost £100,000, would not have been sufficient without extension and improvement for the needs of 1900, there is the other side of the account. If the water carriage system had been introduced at that date, the double cost to the property owners of conversion, first from privies to pail closets and then, ten years later, from pail to water closets, would have been saved. The first conversion from privy midden to pail closet cost the property owners £154,000 during the nine years 1872 to 1881, and the Corporation, which contributed £1

¹ *Conditions in Manchester and Salford*, by T. R. Marr, p. 45.

to each conversion, £59,000, or a total of £212,480. Later, these same pail closets had to be gradually converted into water closets at a considerable cost both to property owners and to the Corporation, who again made a contribution. If the conversion had been carried through energetically in 1892 when powers were first obtained, the Sanitary Committee calculated that there would be an immediate saving of £2,100 and after thirty years—when the loan to enable the Rivers Committee to deal with the sewage (£250,000) had been paid off—a net saving of £15,270 to the rates.¹ This calculation takes no account of the saving in human life and happiness that Manchester sacrificed so callously all these years. By 1897, Dr. Niven reported that of the seventy-eight principal towns of the kingdom, only four still advocated pail closets,² yet still twenty years had to pass before Manchester could be considered a sanitary city.

Apart from the cost of the double conversion, an efficient main drainage system proved to cost less than an inefficient one. In 1900 the cost per head of the population was 8s., in 1937 it was 6s. 6d. That property owners and ratepayers' associations, in their short-sighted zeal for saving the rates and their own pockets, may not always be the best judges even of their own interests and certainly not of those of the community as a whole, is clearly proved in this instance.

CLEANSING AND SCAVENGING

Scavenging is one of the earliest services coming within the sphere of local government. In the township of Manchester we find that by an Act of 1792 the Police Commissioners were required to provide carts to visit twice every week, or oftener if the Commissioners so directed, all streets and places where carts could pass, and give notice of their approach by a loud cry or the sound of a bell, the inhabitants being required to bring their "dust, dirt, dung or ashes, and other filth (except filth from privy)" to the doors of their houses or premises, and to deliver the same to the scavenger,

¹ Report of Sanitary Committee on the Water Closet System, October 19, 1892. (This Report was never signed by the Chairman or presented to the Council.)

² Report of Unhealthy Dwellings Sub-Committee, May 4, 1897.

the expense being made a legal charge on the township rate. But the collection of night-soil or the contents of the privies was no part of their duty. This was disposed of by the landlord to farmers for manure, and there was no regular collection of it. In 1845¹ the Corporation took powers to collect this night-soil and dispose of it.

When the Council was formed, the scavenging of the streets was done under contract by the Road and Street-cleaning Company for the Lamp and Scavenging Committee, which had continued to work under the agreement which this company had had with the Police Commissioners. Part of the scavenging done under this contract was carried out by means of a patent machine invented by Mr. Joseph Whitworth, the first experiment with which was made in London in February 1841, and since that time it had been regularly in use in Manchester and in the townships of Chorlton-on-Medlock and Ardwick. As the cart wheels revolved, the brooms swept the surface of the ground and carried the soil up an incline at the top of which it fell into the body of the cart. It was claimed by the inventor of this machine that it performed in a quarter of an hour nearly the day's work of one man. The machine was used to clean the principal streets and thoroughfares, the others being done by hand labour because they were too narrow to admit the machines.

In 1846 we find dissatisfaction expressed by the Lamp and Scavenging Committee with the way in which the contract was being carried out. There was also a growing feeling that "the cleansing force ought to be under the control of your Committee and that no system of contracting can meet the varying wants of this community." As some of the Council, however, were in favour of renewing the contract with the contractors, the Committee agreed to an alternative plan, whereby there was a division of the scavenging work between the company and the Committee, the company undertaking to do the whole of its cleansing by machine and the Committee making its own arrangements for cleansing some of the roads by hand and also for cleansing the footpaths. This arrangement did not prove satisfactory, and as the company would not hire out the machines to the Corporation, the Committee decided to cleanse the entire township by hand labour. The principal streets were swept daily, the second-class streets three times a week, the third-class streets twice a week, and the fourth-class streets,

¹ Manchester Improvement Act, 1845.

including all courts, alleys and passages, once a week. Judging by the descriptions of the working-class districts, this programme cannot have been rigidly adhered to.

Meanwhile, the scavenging in the other townships, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick and Cheetham, each under the control of the township committee, was done by contract with a private company, but in Hulme it was done by direct labour.

In 1875, as we saw,¹ the separate township committees were abolished, and their scavenging duties transferred to the Highways Committee of the borough. The removal and disposal of night-soil, however, was transferred to the Health Committee. In 1890 a re-arrangement of committees took place, under which cleansing, scavenging and the removal and disposal of night-soil were again united and put under a new committee, the Cleansing Committee, which has been responsible for the carrying out of these functions ever since.

Meanwhile, the lack of water carriage in Manchester and the rapid growth of the town were raising more acutely than ever the problem of the disposal of night-soil, street sweepings and refuse. There was little scientific disposal of refuse. A certain amount of cinders, broken pots, etc., were mixed with the lime and made into mortar. Some of the slaughter-house refuse was ground with ashes and mixed with excreta and gypsum to make concentrated manure which was sold to farmers, but the great bulk of it was carried to various tips. That at Holt Town, in the middle of a crowded part of the city, caused various protests from the neighbouring residents.

In 1878 the first advance was made in Manchester, when the Holt Town disposal works were constructed. "The scheme was planned on a large and comprehensive scale to deal with 90,000 tons of refuse per annum. Batteries of incineration boilers were installed for the double purpose of burning the ashbox refuse and the generation of power to drive the extensive machinery and plant. Resultant clinkers from the fires were turned into builders' mortar. Pail contents were heat-evaporated in an arrangement of concentrators, riddles and tanks, and manufactured into an artificial fertilizer, the sales of which soon exceeded £20,000 per annum. From the animal and fish offals brought in from slaughter-houses and markets, fats, soaps, size, grease and oils were derived and sold.

¹ See above, pp. 132-133.

There cannot be any doubt that the building of these new works, equipped as described . . . constituted a mile-post in the development of public cleansing. . . . The dumphole in a field had been superseded by the utilization works."¹

Holt Town works could, however, deal with only part, and in 1885 64 per cent of the refuse was still deposited on the various tips and sent by rail to the rural districts. The difficulties of this problem were increased by the extension of the city in 1885 and by the refusal of the railway company any longer to convey over the country odorous trucks of night-soil.

The reclamation of waste land by the tipping of refuse so that the land, continually fertilized by the contents of pail closets, could then be cultivated, was undertaken by the Committee and the Carrington Moss estate of over 1,000 acres was bought in 1885. The Cleansing Committee itself farmed the land, which soon proved a sound investment. As the city grew, more land was needed and the Chat Moss estate was purchased in 1895. In this case the land was let out to tenants who promised to take a certain quantity of night-soil from the Committee. Since the acquisition of Carrington and Chat Moss, 3,000,000 tons of pail contents, refuse and street sweepings have been deposited upon these estates, and the farmsteads and holdings reclaimed from the bog-land yield a rent of over £7,000 a year.

When the city finally had a proper sewage system and water carriage, the Cleansing Committee was relieved of part of its previous duties, but there still remained the collection and disposal of dustbin refuse and trade refuse and the cleansing of the streets. It is the second of these which presents the greatest problem and yet offers the most scope for progressive methods. In modern developments of refuse disposal the method of incineration is losing ground in favour of that of utilization and salvage. The first separation plant in Manchester was opened in 1929 and the second and third in 1931 and 1932 respectively.

In recent years another form of tipping has been evolved, known as "controlled tipping"; sometimes called the Bradford system, because that city was the pioneer of this method and demonstrated its practicability on a large scale. Owing to the changes that take

¹ "Public Cleansing," by Bertram B. Jones, printed in *Municipal Engineering and the Sanitary Record*, October 25, 1934.

place in the interior of a refuse tip after the tip has been satisfactorily covered by earth or other suitable material, the contents of the tip are rendered harmless. The low-lying land by the Mersey, which is liable to flooding and therefore of little use, is being reclaimed by this method, and nearly 40 per cent of the ashbin refuse is annually deposited in this way.

Manchester was late in turning from horse to motor vehicles both for cleansing the streets and for the collection of refuse. Horse-drawn uncovered dust carts—or only covered by canvas, when the cart was full and not overfull—were a common sight until a few years ago, and can still be seen in some parts of the city. The fact that the work of the Cleansing Committee had attracted to it members of the Council who were experts in buying and caring for horses, but who knew nothing of motor cars, delayed the transition until the waste and inefficiency of the old-fashioned methods were at last realized. The Committee is now doing its best to make up for lost time, and in spite of the thousands of post-war houses with gardens, the dustbins of which take longer to collect and empty, about £74,000,¹ more than a 3d. rate, is being saved by the improved methods.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND HOSPITALS

In considering infectious diseases, we have to realize that the means of prevention had, during the last hundred years, to be acquired slowly and piecemeal. Manchester, in common with the rest of the country, suffered badly from recurrent epidemics of infectious diseases of various kinds, some of which are practically unknown to-day. It will readily be understood that the condition of housing, the absence of main drainage, the gross overcrowding of people in small, dark and airless dwellings, the letting of cellars as separate habitations, the filthy condition of the soil surrounding the houses of the working class, would greatly encourage disease and foster the spread of infection.

We are so accustomed to the machinery of protection against infection that it is difficult to realize that a hundred years ago the most elementary of these were lacking. There was, it is true,

¹ See above, p. 148.

quarantine of a sort, but it did not prevent cholera being brought into the country, and there were no hospitals in which infected persons might be isolated, no means of disinfection except some rough and ready ones such as limewashing buildings, and, what made epidemics especially difficult to deal with, no notification to the sanitary authority of cases of infection. The registration of deaths became compulsory after the passing of the Registration Act of 1836, but registration was imperfect for some years. However, the registration of deaths was sufficiently general to give an indication of the localities chiefly affected during an epidemic. There was no knowledge of the cause of infectious diseases, bacteriology being unknown. There were curious speculations as to whether cholera was caused by a lack of ozone in the air or was affected by the amount of electricity in the air.¹ That in the case of diarrhoeal diseases, to which class cholera belongs, the most potent source of infection lay in the human excrement allowed to accumulate in middens or on the open ground in close proximity to dwelling-places, was not known until much later. The operations of the house-fly in spreading diarrhoea and of the body louse in disseminating typhus were not discovered until the twentieth century.

It was thought that filth had some connection with disease as a source of pollution of water and of air. Against the disease smallpox, a weapon had been discovered in vaccination as early as 1798, and in 1840 gratuitous public vaccination was established by Act of Parliament, but it was many years after that before complete protection from smallpox by vaccination was arrived at.

Through our hundred years we shall see a population at first quite defenceless against the recurrent invasions of epidemics gradually acquiring a measure of protection against some and complete protection against others. We shall see the City Council gaining new powers from Parliament to combat disease; not always using them to the full until urged forward by public opinion; sometimes trying to use them, finding them inadequate and applying to Parliament for more. Later come the results of having the health services under a medical head who, in addition to directing the services, was enabled by his own investigations on a medical basis to throw light on the cause and spread of infectious diseases. The

¹ *History of Cholera in Manchester, 1849*, by John Leigh and N. Gardiner.

ravages of diseases had their uses; they were "deeply and dreadfully instructive."¹ Mankind began to learn its lesson aided by the growth of scientific knowledge and also, as always happens, by the work of a few outstanding people. Amongst the names associated with the rise of preventive medicine are Sir John Simon, Edwin Chadwick, Southwood Smith and Sir J. P. Kay-Shuttleworth who, as Dr. Kay, was for a time a medical practitioner in Manchester.²

To a city that had no means of protecting itself against the invader, the news that in 1849 Asiatic cholera was again travelling westward across Europe must have been terrifying, all the more so because the epidemic of 1832 had been particularly severe in Manchester. Fortunately, the 1849 epidemic was late in reaching the city and its virulence declined with the general decline all over the country, so that Manchester was under its ravages for a shorter time than other towns. Nevertheless, it lasted from June until October and there were 814 deaths.³ The total number of persons attacked was not known.

Descriptions are given elsewhere in this book⁴ of the state of the houses inhabited by the working classes and their overcrowding, the pollution of the soil through defective and inadequate middens. Such conditions would foster cholera. Dr. John Leigh said that cholera had "almost entirely confined its ravages to those localities or particular streets in which noxious exhalations, proceeding from putrefying or otherwise decomposing matters in rivers, canals, etc., prevail; in which the inhabitants breathe polluted air, arising from bad drainage, overcrowding and bad ventilation, whose employment is precarious and not very remunerative, and whose means therefore are insufficient to procure a necessary amount of suitable and nutritious food." In September the Town Council decided to enforce the Nuisance, Removal and Prevention of Contagious and Epidemic Diseases Act which had been passed earlier in the year, but the colder weather of October seems to have been largely responsible for the departure of cholera from Manchester.

The fear of a recurrence of cholera, which, however, did not materialize, led to the formation three years later of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association. A leading article with the title

¹ Sir John Simon: *English Sanitary Institutions*.

² See above, p. 23.

³ *History of Cholera in Manchester in 1849* (Leigh and Gardiner).

⁴ See below, pp. 284-287, and above, Ch. I.

"Manchester Movements" in the *Examiner and Times* of October 9, 1852, referred to "the formation of a society for the promotion of sanitary purposes. Its chief object is to diffuse by means of lectures and cheap publications a knowledge of the laws of health and thus to prevent the generation and spread of disease and to promote the welfare of the people."

The Sanitary Association appears to have been able to draw into its membership all the keenest spirits in Manchester and Salford amongst the clergy, doctors and business men. They not only sought to spread knowledge, but set themselves to gain it. Some of their members made careful researches and investigations. Before notification of infectious diseases became compulsory they arranged that the Poor Law medical officers should send their secretary details of the cases of infectious disease occurring in their practice. They published a list of these each week, and although they had no information regarding cases occurring in private practice, such facts as they had enabled them to trace the beginning and the decline of epidemics amongst the poorest inhabitants of the city. The Association prided themselves a good deal on these lists, which they described as "an unpaid contribution to knowledge."¹

It was one of the fundamental rules of the Association "to induce general co-operation with constituted authorities." This "co-operation" not infrequently took the form of spurring the Corporations of Manchester and Salford to greater diligence in the carrying out of their powers and in the pages that follow we shall see how actively the Association pressed the provision of isolation hospitals for cases of infectious diseases.

There was no further cholera epidemic in Manchester, but other infectious diseases were almost constantly in evidence though more prevalent in some years than others. In 1863 there was a heavy death-rate from scarlet fever, smallpox and typhus. The report of the Sanitary Association for that year records their dealings with smallpox. Fortified by knowledge arising from their weekly returns of cases obtained from Poor Law medical officers, they tried to rouse public opinion. They urged re-vaccination and the removal of patients from their homes. They waited on the Press and on Boards of Guardians. "The disease abated although it threatened at one time almost indefinitely to pursue its noisome track through

¹ Annual Report of Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, 1863.

every corner of the town and suburbs." The Association's report for 1864 says there were about 4,000¹ cases of smallpox in 1863 with 166 deaths, and in 1864 there were 586 cases in public practice, of which one in sixteen proved fatal. The report for this latter year records 1,124 cases of scarlet fever in Poor Law practice, and that one patient in every ten died. We are still in the time when Manchester had no Medical Officer of Health: in this report for 1864 the Association, with much justification, compares its work with that of Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors in other towns.

The Sanitary Act of 1866, which was mainly if not wholly due to the fear of cholera in England, gave local authorities power to provide hospitals, to insist on disinfection after infectious disease, and to provide "a proper place" (that is what we now call a disinfecting station, usually called "ovens" in those days) in which clothing and household effects could be disinfected. The beginning of the ambulance service also came with this Act which gave local authorities powers to provide "carriages" for conveying infectious persons to hospital. They also had powers to provide mortuaries and to regulate lodging-houses.

In 1868 Dr. John Leigh became Medical Officer of Health, and at once began to call attention to the need for isolation hospitals on the grounds of the high mortality of children under five years of age and of the fact that when he took office one-sixth of all deaths in Manchester were caused by infectious diseases. In this endeavour he was consistently supported by the Sanitary Association, who sent several memorials to the City Council. In his report to the newly-established Health Committee² in the month following his appointment, Dr. Leigh called attention to the large number of deaths from infectious diseases in the ten years 1851-60. These deaths represented an immensely greater number of attacks. There being no compulsory notification, he had no knowledge of the total numbers attacked, but he quoted the statistics obtained by the Sanitary Association from Poor Law medical officers, which showed that 31,575 cases of infectious disease occurred in their public practice alone in the seven years 1861-7. To this total must

¹ This was an estimate. The Association had records of cases occurring in public practice only, but would be able to obtain information of all deaths.

² Health Committee Minutes, April 6, 1868.

be added an unknown number that fell to the care of private practitioners.

The table below,¹ giving the deaths from infectious diseases in Manchester during the ten years 1851-60, shows not only the enormous number of deaths from infectious diseases, but that nearly three-quarters of the deaths occurred in children under five. With this average of over 1,000 deaths per annum amongst a population of over 300,000, it is interesting to compare the deaths

	1851-60		Deaths under 5	Total Deaths at all Ages
Smallpox	356	551
Measles	1,462	1,550
Scarlatina	2,531	3,522
Diphtheria	68	97
Whooping Cough	2,176	2,278
Typhus	685	2,930
			7,278	10,928

from infectious diseases, both notifiable and non-notifiable, in Manchester² in the year 1936, when the population was over three-quarters of a million.

It will be noted that while two of the diseases in the table for 1851-60, smallpox and typhus, have disappeared; others, which if not new, were not then recognized as infectious, now appear.

Dr. Leigh urged that the most efficacious mode of arresting the spread of infectious disease was by the isolation of the cases; "it was idle to attempt to stop the spread of disease by antiseptics alone." Isolation was not possible in working-class houses. In succeeding monthly reports he harped on the same string, the need for more hospital accommodation. Diarrhoea was prevalent and very fatal in the summer of 1868, and he complained that the procedure of charitable hospitals and of Boards of Guardians was too slow to meet the exigencies of a sudden, severe attack. By the time the necessary formalities required by Boards of

¹ Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Registrar-General.

² Medical Officer of Health's Report, 1936.

Guardians were complied with the patient, if a young child, was likely to be dead before medical assistance was obtained. And as regards the public medical charities, first a "recommendation" must be obtained from a subscriber—a lengthy and troublesome task. The provision of hospital accommodation for infectious diseases was extremely meagre. A fever hospital, called the House of Recovery, had been opened in 1796 by public-spirited doctors

1936		Under 5	Total Deaths at all Ages
Chickenpox..	.. ..	1	1
Measles ..	.. ..	108	121
Scarlet Fever ..	.. ..	5	10
Influenza ..	.. ..	7	128
Whooping Cough ..	..	46	47
Mumps ..	.. ..	—	2
Diphtheria ..	.. ..	39	92
Poliomyelitis ..	.. ..	—	1
Cerebro-Spinal Fever ..	..	19	38
Enteric Fever ..	.. ..	—	2
Epidemic Diarrhoea ..	..	1	1
Diarrhoea ..	.. ..	68	72
		294	515

and their friends, which accommodated a hundred patients.¹ In 1852 this hospital had been absorbed by the Manchester Royal Infirmary and the number of beds set aside for fever patients was only 32. The Poor Law infirmaries provided 157 beds and there were five beds for children in the children's hospital at Bridge Street.

This provision for a population of 300,000, with scarlet fever, smallpox, typhus, typhoid, measles, dysentery and diarrhoea prevalent, was justly condemned as inadequate by the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Association. Their efforts possibly led to the recognition that the time had come for the separation of fever from general cases. In 1869, Mr. Robert Barnes² gave £9,000

¹ *A Short History of the House of Recovery in Manchester*, by F. Renaud, 1885.

² Member of the Council from 1848-57, Mayor 1851-53, donor of the Barnes Convalescent Home.

towards the cost of a new fever hospital to be built in one of the suburbs of Manchester. This was the beginning of Monsall Hospital, which was opened in 1871 with accommodation for 128 patients. It was a charitable hospital under the control of the Royal Infirmary, and ordinarily patients would need a "recommendation" from a subscriber. The Manchester Corporation, however, contributed towards the funds of the hospital and sent patients there. In 1875 it built a temporary pavilion in the hospital grounds for thirty-two smallpox patients. The way was thus prepared for what must inevitably come to pass: the ultimate taking over Monsall Hospital by the Corporation. This took place in 1896 under the Manchester Corporation Act of that year.

It was not until 1871 that the City Council decided to erect a disinfecting station. In his annual report for that year Dr. Leigh reports that the "oven," that is, the disinfecting station, was working well, and that vigorous disinfection of houses followed by lime-washing was being carried out by a permanent staff of four disinfectors.

Manchester came out really well in the smallpox epidemic of 1871, having a death-rate of only seven per thousand of the population—the lowest amongst the large towns, and Dr. Leigh attributed this to intensive vaccination and re-vaccination.

The view that the municipal authorities and not charitable bodies should provide accommodation for infectious diseases was put forward by a Manchester doctor in a paper read to the Sanitary Association¹ in 1872. Isolation of the sick, he contends, is the only means for preventing the spread of infection, and he insists that "to make provision for cases of fever by the ordinary system of private charity is from a sanitary point of view utterly wrong." He goes on to criticize the current procedure for getting a child suffering from, say, scarlet fever into a general hospital. "When the child has been ailing for several days the mother gets a 'recommend' for the Infirmary or one or other of the children's hospitals and waits several hours with perhaps 100 others before arrangements are made for taking the child who would not have done so much harm if left at home, though the other's chance of survival might be increased by treatment in hospital." Monsall Hospital was then being built through the munificence of Mr. Barnes, but the writer decides

¹ Report of Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, 1872 (Appendix).

that fever hospitals "are not a case for the exercise of private charity." His proposal that arrangements should be made with Poor Law medical officers and doctors in private practice "to give information of cases coming under their notice," was prophetic, but he saw difficulty in getting private practitioners to send their poor patients to hospital!

In the two following years the demand for sufficient hospital accommodation grew stronger. The Sanitary Association accused the City Council of not fulfilling its undoubted function of providing proper hospital accommodation for infectious diseases.¹ In 1874 Dr. Leigh, who apparently contemplated that the Corporation should maintain, but private charity should build, fever hospitals, attributed the high death-rate of children from scarlet fever to "the apathy, indifference, and neglect on the part of the wealthy."² In the same year the Sanitary Association sent yet another memorial to the City Council urging fever accommodation, not through voluntary charity but under the powers given to local authorities by the Sanitary Act of 1866.³

In the November of 1875 the Association seemed to lose patience altogether with the City Council and took it sternly to task for its continued inaction.⁴ The Association had asked in October of the previous year for the provision of small isolation hospitals and had been told that a Special Committee had been appointed to go into the matter, but nothing had been done. They contended that "in spite of structural sanitary improvements the more serious infectious diseases are still in evidence in the city." It appears from another communication⁵ sent to the Council in the following year that the Association did not consider the arrangements made for sending patients to Monsall Hospital (still under the Infirmary) and to the Children's Hospital at Pendlebury satisfactory. They wanted the Corporation to have isolation hospitals under its own control.

In 1875 the Public Health Act, which is commonly referred to as the Magna Charta of public health administration, was passed. It did not, however, embody the recommendation which the Man-

¹ Annual Report, 1873.

² City Council Minutes, April 1, 1874.

³ Annual Report, 1874, Appendix C.

⁴ Annual Report of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, 1875.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1876.

chester and Salford Sanitary Association had made for compulsory notification of infectious diseases. Possibly the adverse influence of the medical profession was too strong. The vast majority of doctors were at first opposed to notification.¹ However, Manchester secured notification as early as 1881 under an order with a very cumbersome title,² but notification was not made compulsory in the country as a whole until 1899.

Means for combating infectious diseases were rapidly accumulating in Manchester in the closing years of the nineteenth century. The first municipally-owned hospital was a building in Clayton Vale, taken over from the Cleansing Committee in 1893 to be used for smallpox cases. In 1896 the Corporation took over Monsall Hospital from the Royal Infirmary Board under a local Act of Parliament. It then contained 299 beds.³ Manchester has only had four medical Officers of Health, having made the appointment later than other large towns, and each in turn has devoted himself to reducing the mortality from preventable diseases. That they are to a very large extent preventable can be recognized by a glance at Table II in Appendix II. No deaths from typhus appear since 1890 nor from smallpox since 1905. The tracing of smallpox contacts with a view to their vaccination (or re-vaccination) to prevent their contracting the disease seems, according to Dr. Niven, to require the keenness, energy and resource of a Sherlock Holmes. He relates how in the 1903 epidemic he visited suspected common lodging-houses at night and examined the foreheads of sleeping inmates by means of a lamp. Thanks to the preference of the smallpox eruption for the forehead, he detected thirty-two cases in this way.⁴ Turning again to the table, we see that deaths from enteric (typhoid) fever have diminished and do not figure in the mortality table since 1930. While scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles and whooping-cough still make their attacks, chiefly on young children, the case-fatality⁵ has been greatly reduced. Dr. Veitch Clark, the present Medical Officer of Health, has shown that whereas for the forty-five years 1891 to 1935 the scarlet fever case-fatality was

¹ Newsholme: *Fifty Years in Public Health*.

² Manchester Order confirmed by the Local Government Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Halifax, etc.) Act, 1881.

³ Subsequent extensions have brought the accommodation up to 760 beds.

⁴ *Observations on the History of Public Health Effort in Manchester*, 1923.

⁵ Case-fatality is the percentage of deaths occurring amongst cases notified.

2.99 per cent, it was only 0.46 per cent in the year 1936. In the case of diphtheria, the Schick test has been used since 1927, with the result that up to the end of 1936 no less than 68,872 persons had been immunized or found to be immune from diphtheria.¹

TUBERCULOSIS

Tuberculosis was another of the diseases which during the century under review killed tens of thousands of Manchester citizens without any direct efforts by the public health services to check its ravages, except in so far as general improvement in the environment may be said to have had some effect. To die of a "decline" in youth was accepted as the common fate of a large section of the community in the middle of the nineteenth century; it was not recognized as an infectious disease and the "treatment," which mainly consisted of carefully keeping fresh air from the patient, was calculated to hasten his death.

The effectual dealing with tuberculosis started in the early days of the present century and is part of that new orientation whereby, without ceasing to effect improvements in the environment, public health administration turned its attention to the individual.

Soon after Koch had discovered the tubercle bacillus in 1882, and the work of other German scientists had shown the disease to be infectious, Professor Delépine was working on the subject at Manchester University and Dr. Niven, who was a pioneer in the fight against tuberculosis, was investigating deaths from this disease in Oldham, where he was then Medical Officer of Health. By 1893 he was making proposals for the voluntary notification of phthisis, and although he carried the Oldham Medical Society with him, the Sanitary Committee turned them down. In 1894, Dr. Niven became Medical Officer of Health for Manchester, where he found that some steps of a tentative character had been taken.² Professor Delépine had advised on general measures of disinfection, and Dr. Arthur Ransome and the staff of the Consumption Hospital had turned their attention to the prevention as well as to the cure of tuberculosis. In 1898, Dr. Niven's efforts to obtain the

¹ Manchester Health Report, 1936.

² *Observations on the History of Public Health Effort in Manchester, 1923.*

voluntary notification of phthisis were backed up by the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association under the chairmanship of Dr. Daniel Leech, and were finally successful in September 1899. Manchester was the second town to adopt voluntary notification, Brighton, where Dr. (subsequently Sir) Arthur Newsholme was Medical Officer of Health, had secured it a few months earlier.

At first notifications were only invited from public institutions, but in February 1900, private practitioners were invited to notify cases occurring in their practices. It will be realized that tuberculosis, where illness lasts on into months and years, is in a different category from acute infectious fevers which run a relatively short course. Moreover, there was the fear that notification might brand the sufferer and adversely affect his occupational and social relations. It says much, therefore, for Dr. Niven and those who supported him that voluntary notification of phthisis by medical practitioners was achieved so early. The importance of milk as a method of infection, especially in children, was realized; the noted Manchester's Milk Clauses were passed,¹ authorizing inspections by a veterinary surgeon of cows in the Manchester cowsheds for tuberculosis of the udder, and of cows on farms outside the city from which tuberculous milk had been sent into the city. Orders similar to the Manchester Milk Clauses were subsequently made for the whole country.

Dr. Niven records at length² the system of investigation, disinfection and education of the patient in personal precautions against infecting others which was carried out under his direction. He traced a close connection between tuberculosis and poverty, overcrowding and malnutrition. A voluntary fund was raised by public appeal, there being at that time no other source except charity for supplying necessitous patients with additional nourishment. The extent of institutional treatment was extremely limited, attention being chiefly turned on disinfection, especially after deaths, and on teaching the infected person not to be a danger to others. As a matter of fact, such sanatorium treatment as was given was brief and intended to train the patient in personal hygiene, to sleep with windows open and to carry on the routine after returning home. The experiment of using the smallpox hospital in Clayton

¹ Manchester Corporation Act, 1899.

² *Observations on the History of Public Health Effort in Manchester, 1923.*

for tuberculosis began in 1901; it was interrupted in 1902 by the occurrence of smallpox and resumed in 1904. In 1905 the Corporation secured twenty beds at the new Crossley Sanatorium at Delamere. In addition to these fifty beds provided by the municipality, there was a variable number up to about four hundred available in the Poor Law hospitals, but, needless to say, the independent poor objected to making use of them.

Voluntary notification adopted in the more progressive towns led the way to compulsory notification. When Mr. John Burns was President of the Local Government Board and Sir Arthur Newsholme Chief Medical Officer, the Tuberculosis Regulations were made which became operative on January 1, 1909.

The National Health Insurance Acts brought in "Sanatorium Benefit" in 1912, the term including not only treatment in sanatoria but at dispensaries and by private practitioners, and progress was stimulated by Exchequer grants up to half the total estimated cost of treating non-insured persons and the dependants of insured persons.

The Manchester Tuberculosis Scheme centred round a Chief Tuberculosis Officer¹ and the Dispensary in Hardman Street.² Baguley Sanatorium, originally the fever hospital of the Withington Urban District Council, was enlarged and adapted as a hospital for moderately advanced cases. Abergel Sanatorium, with fifty-eight beds, which had belonged to the Guardians, was also taken over and the number of beds at the Crossley Sanatorium was increased. Clayton Hospital, enlarged up to sixty-eight beds, was reserved for advanced cases.

In the quarter of a century that has elapsed since 1912 much development has taken place. Baguley Sanatorium, enlarged and improved, now makes a feature of occupational therapy and has good workshops. A section of the Abergel Sanatorium, opened in 1931, now contains over two hundred beds for children who suffer from surgical tuberculosis and who can enjoy the sun cure in that lovely part of Wales. In addition to resident doctors and a large staff of nurses, there is a school and a staff of eight teachers.

The achievements in the control of tuberculosis have been great.

¹ Dr. D. C. Sutherland, who is now the Senior Tuberculosis Officer.

² A new dispensary in Oxford Road opposite the Infirmary has replaced the one in Hardman Street.

The mortality rate has fallen markedly and is now about a third of what it was in 1881, when records were first kept. The incidence rate, that is, the proportion of the population attacked, was 1.65 per thousand in 1936 as compared with 5.32 in 1913, when notification of all forms of tuberculosis became compulsory. In addition to the preventive measures which reduce the number of persons attacked, the curative treatment is increasing the number of complete recoveries. In the five years 1932-36 inclusive, 2,020 cases have been taken off the register as cured.

Tuberculosis, like some of the other diseases that did so much damage, is now on the wane. When we realize how many lives can be saved by preventive measures, better sanitation, better housing, better food, more knowledge, as well as by earlier diagnosis and treatment of disease, we are encouraged to go on with the battle against the diseases which still threaten our citizens.

VENEREAL DISEASES

The Venereal Diseases Scheme, inaugurated in 1916 under the Public Health (Venereal Diseases) Regulations, added more curative work to the Public Health Department. There was no notification as in the case of tuberculosis, the Government grant was larger (75 per cent) and the general hospitals were brought into the scheme, treatment centres apart from hospitals being only sanctioned in exceptional circumstances. Originally there were centres at four hospitals, now extended to six hospitals. In addition, clinics are held weekly at two of the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres and there is an auxiliary centre in the grounds of Monsall Hospital. Ablution centres formed part of the scheme in the early days, but they were subsequently closed.

GENERAL HOSPITALS

All this time, whilst the City Council had been dealing with infectious diseases, tuberculosis and venereal diseases, hospital accommodation for surgical cases and for general diseases had been provided by the Poor Law Guardians for the destitute, and by

voluntary hospitals for the general public. The Local Government Act of 1929, which abolished the Guardians, brought their hospitals¹ with over five thousand beds under the control of the Public Health Committee.

The City Council lost no time in making the necessary declaration² by which all hospital treatment was to be provided under the Public Health Acts and not by way of poor relief. That meant that in future no distinction would be made in the hospital treatment provided between "necessitous" and other citizens.

The next step was in 1935, when the Manchester Joint Hospitals Advisory Board was formed. The object of the Board is so to co-ordinate the work and equipment of the hospitals—both voluntary and municipal—that the hospital service of the city shall ultimately function as a single hospital service.

The Board, which includes representatives of the University—in virtue of that body's interest in the training of medical students—as well as of the voluntary hospitals and of the Public Health Committee, has in its constitution provided for a much larger sphere of action than that outlined in Section 13 of the Local Government Act, 1929. All the hospitals in the city have subscribed to this constitution.

An advisory panel with co-opted specialists has been created to advise the Public Health Committee on the appointment of consultants to the staff of the municipal hospitals. There is considerable likelihood that this method of appointment will be extended to cover the voluntary hospitals of the city also.

Investigation into the reduction of waiting lists and the organization of fracture clinics is proceeding, and other matters of general hospital interest are receiving the attention of the Board.

SMOKE ABATEMENT

Though Manchester is probably not guilty of producing more smoke for its size than any other large industrial town, the city is so situated as to suffer badly not only for her own crimes, but also

¹ Crumpsall and Withington Hospitals, Booth Hall Hospital for Children, Langho Colony for Epileptics, and Rose Hill Convalescent Home for Children.

² August 28, 1929.

for those of her neighbours. Lying in a hollow, with the prevailing winds blowing smoke from many neighbouring towns into the city, she will inevitably receive and retain a great deal of it. Nature has not been kind to Manchester in helping her to get rid of smoke. It is perhaps for that reason that powers were sought early to deal with the nuisance, and that up to the present day Manchester has been called "the home of smoke abatement."

In advance of national legislation on the subject, Manchester had a smoke clause in her Police Act of 1844¹ which requires that "every furnace employed . . . in the working of engines by steam, and every furnace . . . employed in any mill, factory, dye-house, iron foundry, glass-house, distillery, brewery, bakehouse, gas-works, or other building used for the purposes of trade or manufacture, shall in all cases where the same shall be practicable be so constructed so as to consume or burn the smoke arising from such furnace. . . ."

Having got a smoke clause, Manchester seems to have set to work to administer it vigorously. The Minutes of the Nuisance Committee of December 30, 1844, state that notices were to be advertised in all the Manchester newspapers and also printed for distribution "that from and after 1st March next proceedings would be instituted against all parties who offend and neglect to consume smoke arising from their respective furnaces." Several offenders seem to have been detected by the beginning of May, though they escaped immediate retribution because the Town Clerk was absent in London on public business.² Thereafter the Minutes of the Nuisance Committee relate at intervals notices served and fines imposed, but what relation successful actions bore to the total number of offences does not appear. That the smoke clause was not wholly adequate is shown from passages in a letter dated March 4, 1847, from the Town Clerk (Joseph Heron) to Viscount Morpeth when national legislation on the subject was under consideration. He writes: "I fear that the clause proposed (which is almost the same as the clause in the Manchester Police Act) will not satisfactorily secure the intended object. The *consuming* of smoke is scarcely possible, although the prevention of smoke in certain kinds of furnaces and fireplaces is to a great extent practicable. . . . In the opinion of practical and scientific men the law ought to apply to the making of smoke and not to the construction

¹ Section 75.

² Minutes of the Nuisance Committee, May 7, 1845.

of the furnace." To-day, ninety years after Sir Joseph Heron wrote to Lord Morpeth, his opinion still holds good that the making of smoke should constitute the offence and not the construction of the furnace. But it is very curious to note that legislators seem attached to the idea of consuming smoke and like to concentrate on the construction of the furnace, because a phrase similar to the one in the Manchester Police Act has appeared in all the national Acts passed subsequently, though they do contain an alternative phrase penalizing the *making* of smoke. So advanced for his time was Manchester's Town Clerk that he even mentions smoke from house-fires which, he says, cannot be prevented except by the use of coke.¹

An attempt was made to introduce a smoke clause into the Public Health Act of 1848, when the voice of Lancashire, though not apparently of Manchester, was raised in protest. The clause was inserted while the Bill was in a Select Committee of the House of Lords with the full sanction of the Government, but was furiously opposed and finally disagreed to by the Commons.² Mr. John Bright, having declared it his custom to oppose every Smoke Bill, said: "It was quite impossible to work out any smoke bill. . . . The clause was ridiculous. In Lancashire no three men were found to agree upon any effectual plan for preventing smoke." Mr. Henry Drummond queried whether black smoke was prejudicial to health. The more he had seen of the Bill the more he was satisfied there was a good deal of quackery and mock philosophy in such questions. Mr. Howard did not think it possible to apply the clause to any manufacturing town, but he, as Lord Morpeth, who was in charge of the Bill, subsequently remarked, represented the highest chimney in England! The Lords were much displeased at the rejection of their smoke clause and blamed the Government for giving way to the "great chimney owners."³

So the smoke clause in the 1848 Act was lost, but Manchester had a weapon in her 1844 Act, imperfect, but better than nothing. From 1856 onward we find the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association concerned with the smoke nuisance amongst their other

¹ In 1935 the Manchester Housing Committee decided experimentally to equip 50 houses at Wythenshawe with grates constructed to burn coke and lighted by means of gas jets.

² House of Commons, August 7, 1848.

³ House of Lords, August 15, 1848.

numerous activities. Time and again they presented memorials to the City Council asking for stricter enforcement of the law, chiefly in the interests of the working classes, who were more grievously injured than others "in as much as they are compelled from the nature of their employment to live in the vicinity of the establishments where the smoke is produced."¹ The Sanitary Association did not stop short at bringing pressure to bear on the City Council. They realized the need of an educated public opinion, being "persuaded that the full abatement of the nuisance will be secured only in proportion as correct information upon the subject is generally diffused." They seemed to have used the Press a good deal for their propaganda, and the report already quoted tells us they inserted in all the local newspapers a digest of the Report from the General Board of Health presented to Viscount Palmerston—then Home Secretary—in 1854. This digest contained "evidence in favour of the suppression of the smoke nuisance" by Manchester's own Town Clerk and it was a bright idea on the part of the Sanitary Association to give it publicity in the local Press.

In 1866 the Sanitary Act was passed, and the powers of local authorities for dealing with the smoke nuisance were considerably strengthened. Section 19 (3) is similar to the smoke clause in the Manchester Act of 1844 and concerns any fireplace or furnace which does not consume its own smoke, but a second phrase was added which reads "any chimney (not being the chimney of a private dwelling-house) sending forth black smoke in such a quantity as to be a nuisance shall be deemed to be a nuisance liable to be dealt with summarily."

So, after nearly twenty years, Sir Joseph Heron's sound opinion was embodied in a national Act with a workable clause in which not the construction of the furnace but the making of smoke constituted the offence.²

The Minutes of the Nuisance Committee do not record the coming into operation of new legislation as it affects its work, but it may be assumed that it did use its powers under the smoke clauses of the 1866 Sanitary Act as they were stronger than those in the local Act of 1844. At any rate, in 1874 we find the Sanitary Association, which had appointed two inspectors to take

¹ Annual Report of the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, 1856.

² The smoke clause in the Public Health Act of 1875 was similar to that of 1866.

independent observations of smoke from factory chimneys, urging the City Council to give full effect to its powers under the Sanitary Act of 1866, because the evidence showed that the law was extensively infringed in Manchester.

In the next few years the Nuisance Committee was increasingly active about the smoke nuisance. The peak years seem to have been 1876 and 1877, when the number of firms visited and cautioned and the number of abatement notices served reached a very high total. The passing of the Public Health Act of 1875 may have stimulated the Committee to greater activities though it did not increase its powers, or it may have been the wholesome effect of the voluntary societies that were so watchful in the matter of smoke. We find that in 1878 the Noxious Vapours Abatement Association told the President of the Local Government Board that as regards Manchester the Committee was maintaining a very strict supervision and it commented on "the zealous co-operation and assistance" of Mr. Rook, the Superintendent of the Nuisance Department.¹

As the fines imposed under the 1875 Public Health Act for smoke nuisances were too small to be an effective deterrent the City Council secured by a local Act a daily penalty of up to £10 for failure to comply with an abatement order.² That was a gesture showing that it meant business, but the Nuisance Committee seems to have grown slack by 1891, when the City Council received a severely-worded memorial from the Noxious Vapours Abatement Association complaining that only a very small proportion of offenders and not necessarily every bad case was summoned before the magistrates. "At this date the full penalty of £10 a day had never been imposed though some firms had been fined £52."³ The Association also in the same year turned to advocate a new line of attack on the smoke problem by the cheapening and popularizing of smokeless methods of heating. A memorial was presented to the Gas Committee⁴ which urged "the increased use of gas as one of the most feasible methods of lessening the present excessive pollution of the air by coal smoke." It submitted "that the

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, January 18, 1879.

² Manchester Corporation Act, 1882, Section 44. The penalty clause is still used, although prosecutions are now made under the Public Health Act, 1936.

³ *Manchester City News*, March 21, 1891.

⁴ Minutes of the City Council, February 4, 1891.

excessive price of gas constitutes a tax which is most unfair in its incidence upon citizens, inasmuch as gas consumers of to-day have to pay for improvements and public works from which all citizens derive benefit."

Pressure brought to bear on the Council to allow the Gas and Electricity Committees to provide their services at cost price and in the interests of a cleaner atmosphere to cease taxing profits for the relief of rates is dealt with in another chapter.¹

So far we have recorded pressure of voluntary societies in favour of more stringent application of the law against smoke. But there were exceptions. In December 1894 a deputation from the Chamber of Commerce² complained to the Sanitary Committee that inspection was too drastic, that no other local authority was so rigid in its method of smoke inspection as Manchester and that the result would be to drive away trade from the city.

In subsequent years pressure begins to come from within the City Council itself as well as from outside bodies, and demands for a special committee to consider the whole question of the smoke nuisance are recorded in the Council Minutes. In 1912 the Air Pollution Advisory Board was formed as a sub-committee of the Sanitary Committee, with experts in science and architecture as co-opted members. A memorial presented to the Council by various scientific and other societies was the immediate cause of the formation of the Board which confined itself entirely to research and propaganda.³ The war, coming soon after the Board began work, hindered its activities, but researches were made by Dr. Margaret Fishenden on domestic fire grates and by Professor Gee, of the College of Technology, on the condition of the Manchester atmosphere. In 1919 the Board published a pamphlet entitled *The Black Smoke Tax*, which has been more often quoted than any other on the subject, perhaps because of its arresting title.⁴

The existence of the Air Pollution Advisory Board does not seem to have been officially terminated, but it has not functioned in recent years. Efforts to attain clean air took a new direction in 1924, when the Manchester and District Regional Smoke Abate-

¹ See p. 363.

² Sanitary Committee Minutes, December 30, 1896.

³ Report of the Sanitary Committee on Air Pollution, 1915.

⁴ *The Black Smoke Tax—an inquiry into the cost of household washing in Manchester and Harrogate respectively.*

ment Committee was formed at the instance of the Ministry of Health. The Committee covers the Regional Town Planning area; fifty-six of the local authorities in that area are represented on it. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity. It assists manufacturers with technical advice on the efficient operating of boiler plant so as to reduce smoke. It has made recommendations for uniform time limit concession,¹ definition of black smoke and methods of inspection, and has arranged training courses for stokers and boiler attendants. It is held that the time has now come for the Advisory Committee to be replaced by a statutory Joint Smoke Abatement Board. Such a body, set up under provisions in the Public Health Act, would be responsible for enforcing the smoke clauses over the whole area, for directing the work of the inspectors—who would be in the Board's employment—and for taking legal action when necessary. It is estimated that one-ninth of a penny rate contributed by each of the constituent bodies² would meet the expenditure of the Statutory Board. The result would be uniform administration over the area, bringing the small urban districts, which often make much smoke but cannot afford adequate inspec-torial staff, under the same quality of inspection as the large towns. Manchester is pressing strongly for the Statutory Board and since 1935, Alderman W. T. Jackson and Dr. Veitch Clark, Chairman and Hon. Secretary respectively of the Advisory Committee, have been actively engaged in getting support from local authorities represented on that Committee for the proposal to approach the Ministry of Health for a Provisional Order setting up a statutory body.

The story of the fight against air pollution by smoke is a long one, dating from the thirteenth century. We have followed it in Manchester for the last hundred years. What is the position to-day? We cannot say that Dr. John Leigh's "dark canopy which hangs as a pall over the city" is a thing of the past, or something dimly remembered by the very old. At the time of writing, November 1937, that dark canopy has been much in evidence, for Manchester

¹ It is held by the local authority that there is no offence unless the emission of smoke exceeds a certain time in a given period. The time limit in Manchester is two minutes in the aggregate in a half-hour period. Less strict authorities allow three minutes or more in half an hour.

² There are between eighty and ninety local authorities in the Regional Town Planning area.

has had early and severe visitations of fog this winter. Sometimes it has been the overhead darkness, which requires complete lighting-up for houses, business premises and vehicles at midday, when the city has literally been under a roof of soot, but without mist, visibility at street level being the same as at night. Other times the city has been wrapped in choking sulphurous fog, composed of mist, a natural phenomenon met with in the open country and at sea, but here laden with soot. And if further demonstration of our smoke-laden air is necessary, there are the fine new buildings built in the last ten or fifteen years gradually approximating in dinginess to the old. Even the new Central Library is grimy compared with the still newer Town Hall Extension. So much thought and energy have, as we have seen, been spent on the smoke question during the last hundred years and yet this urgently needed health reform lags behind all the rest. The reason is partly because although smoke kills, it does not kill quickly.¹ Polluted water will kill more quickly than soot-laden air and the relation of cause and effect will be more obvious.² Public opinion is not yet alarmed about the smoke evil. It was wholesome fear that led to the successful tackling of "stinking nuisances" and horrible diseases such as cholera and smallpox.

So far as industrial smoke in Manchester is concerned, the position should be greatly improved if and when the proposed Statutory Joint Smoke Abatement Board is set up. The city does now control her own chimneys to an increasingly great extent. The four smoke inspectors devote their whole time to the work. But Manchester has neighbours in whose areas smoke, which does not respect local government boundaries, is produced. Some striking figures in the Medical Officer of Health's Report for 1935 show how much industrial smoke is produced outside the city boundaries compared with the smoke emitted from chimneys inside the city itself.

Over domestic smoke the local authority has no powers—as yet. The building of thousands of new houses has greatly added to air pollution from this source, in spite of the increased use of

¹ The Manchester death-rate from respiratory diseases is higher than that of the country as a whole.

² An unfounded rumour that watercress was responsible for a typhoid outbreak in Croydon recently made all watercress wherever grown unsaleable for a time. A severe visitation of fog in Manchester and long lists of deaths in the newspapers the following week leaves public opinion undisturbed.

gas and electricity for cooking. Every new house has at least one open fireplace and in the overwhelmingly great majority bituminous coal is burned.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE

For the beginning of this side of public health administration we must go back for just three-quarters of a century. In fact, Manchester may claim the credit for having invented health visiting on a voluntary basis. In 1862 the Manchester and Salford Ladies' Sanitary Reform Association was formed. It was afterwards called the Ladies' Health Society and in 1878 was amalgamated, as the Ladies' Section, with the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association. They employed women of the working class to visit among the poorer people and teach them the laws of health. They seem from the reports to have, with considerable success, concentrated attention largely on promoting cleanliness, and when occasion required it they turned up their sleeves, tucked up their skirts, and gave the housewife a demonstration in how to clean her house.

In the Annual Report of the Ladies' Sanitary Reform Association for 1872 we read that "Domestic teaching of almost every kind is being carried into the houses of the people. . . ." The following sentences are amusing in view of later developments. "The disinfecting powder and the medical soap are the keys by which the doors and hearts are opened. There are so many irritating and degrading discomforts against which these simple remedies secure them that the poor are most grateful for the agents' visits." While not necessarily accepting the optimistic view of the efficacy of the powder and soap against verminous insects to which the delicately-veiled remarks obviously refer, we can admire the attempt of this voluntary society to deal with pests which, for many years to come, public health administration did not tackle seriously. True, local authorities provided cleansing stations for the treatment of verminous persons, but arrangements to disinfect houses are of very recent date. They have, however, made rapid progress in the last few years especially in Manchester, which did pioneer work with hydrocyanic acid gas for disinfecting the household effects of tenants from slum clearance areas. Manchester is still one of the

few towns where houses are disinfested prior to demolition as a precaution against the spread of vermin.

To return to our women visitors. They had no special training in instructing mothers in child-rearing and, indeed, in those early days it would have been hard for them to get it. Some years of the present century had elapsed before the human infant was regarded as worthy of a place in the medical curriculum. The work of the visitors seemed to meet with the approval not only of the society which employed them but also of the Corporation, for after nearly thirty years of activity the latter undertook, in 1890, to pay the salaries of six of the fourteen visitors. Dr. Tatham was then Medical Officer of Health and it appears that he assumed a general supervision of the work of all the visitors. Later, Dr. Niven recommended appointment of a trained educated woman to supervise the visitors, and Miss Eleanor Greg was appointed in 1905. In 1907 the Infant Life Protection Sub-Committee was set up by the City Council and took over the whole staff of the voluntary society, it being understood that when new appointments were made, only trained nurses would be eligible.

A system of voluntary notification of births by midwives had been arranged, but "owing to local opposition"¹ Manchester did not adopt the Notification of Births Act, 1907, until 1912.

In 1908 the Schools for Mothers were started in Manchester. The first centre was opened at Mill Street, Ancoats; by 1915 there were six. Others were opened subsequently and have been gradually taken over by the Corporation, but not to the total exclusion of the voluntary workers who still continue to assist.

The Notification of Births Extension Act of 1915 not only made notification compulsory everywhere, but brought in Government grants in aid of the local authorities' work for child welfare. Since then there have been great developments in all directions. The Local Government Board and subsequently the Ministry of Health pressed for large staffs of health visitors. The number of centres was increased and they were supplemented by ante-natal clinics and gradually a certain amount of treatment, hitherto regarded as the sphere of the private practitioner only, began to be given. The supply of milk at cheap rates, Virol, cod-liver oil, etc., and later massage, all became part of the provision for maternity and child

¹ Niven: *Observations on the History of Public Health Effort in Manchester*, 1923.

welfare. Beds in the Manchester Babies' Hospital¹ were reserved for use in this connection.

From the small voluntary beginning as far back as 1862, when a few working women started to visit the poorest homes, and from the experiment, also voluntary, nearly half a century later of centres to which mothers might go for advice, has developed the large municipal Maternity and Child Welfare Department, which is concerned with the child from the time before his birth until he reaches the age of five and passes into the care of the Education Committee.

To-day this large-scale work engages the services under the Medical Officer of Health of a woman Assistant Medical Officer of Health, sixteen doctors and a non-medical staff of ninety-nine persons, including health visitors, inspectors of midwives, Welfare Centre superintendents, nurses and masseuses.²

The fall in the infant mortality rate from 188 in 1900 to 77 in 1937 shows that out of every thousand babies born, over a hundred who would have died thirty-six years ago now survive. Surely the money spent on this service has proved a sound investment. Unfortunately, the maternal mortality rate is high, 4.98 per thousand confinements.

¹ Founded 1914.

² The scheme for municipal midwives was introduced during 1937.

CHAPTER VII

EDUCATION, ART GALLERY, LIBRARIES

1

1838-1870

THE early part of the nineteenth century had seen in Manchester, as in the rest of the country, a stirring of interest in the education of the people.

The Sunday school movement, which started in Manchester in 1784 with a meeting summoned by the Borough Reeve and Constables, had spread, so that in forty years there were 23,000 children in these schools being taught reading as well as religion. The unexampled success of the Sunday school movement all over the country, and particularly in the industrial towns, was largely due to the happy combination which it provided of the two predominant sentiments of the upper towards the lower classes at that time. On the one hand, the outburst of humanitarian feeling towards the children of the poor, which expressed itself in the first Factory Act (1802), was strong amongst the more humane of the men who were benefiting by the rapid growth of industry in the northern towns and, on the other hand, the subversive doctrines of the French Revolution, which found an echo in the demands of the early Socialists and Radicals, made employers nervous of the results of popular education.

Later they came to share Adam Smith's belief that safety lay in education, but in the early part of the century they were doubtful if ability to read would not lead to a spread of seditious doctrines. At this time the question that agitated the minds of the public was not: "How are the masses to be educated, but shall they be educated at all?"¹ The Sunday schools appeared as a solution of the problem. They were financed and largely taught by members of the middle class, and they were the means of bringing a civilizing influence to bear upon the mass of hideously overworked and uncared for

¹ *Memoirs of Reverend Cecil Wray*, by Henry Wray, 1887, p. 11.

children, who swarmed in the filthy surroundings of the industrial towns. At the same time, as one of their supporters said, "they seek to furnish opportunities of instruction to the children of the poor without interfering with any weekday industry; to infuse into the tender minds of infancy ideas of decency, sobriety and industry; to inure them to early habits of regularity in their attendance at church and to teach them how to spend their leisure hours of Sunday to their own improvement, advantage and happiness, which are now almost universally consumed in idleness, profanation and riot."¹

When the Manchester Statistical Society undertook its survey of education in 1834² it found that the number of children attending Sunday schools was half as many more as those attending all the other schools put together.

There were eighty-six Sunday schools, of which twenty-five were Church of England, eighteen Wesleyan, nine Roman Catholic, nine Independent and the rest divided amongst other Nonconformist bodies. The number of children attending them was 33,196, of which 31 per cent attended those attached to the Church of England. Reading was taught in all but two, writing in the majority, but not usually on Sunday. Evening schools were held in connection with most of the Sunday schools, to which not only went the children who had finished twelve hours in the factory, and longer hours in unregulated employment, but older boys and girls, and grown men and women. Lending libraries and benefit and clothing societies were found in connection with seventy-four.³

As the Sunday school was the first form of our day school system, so its influence persisted when that system had so developed that there was no longer the necessity for secular teaching in Sunday schools. "Thus the Sunday School," says Sir J. Kay-Shuttleworth, "became the type of the daily school, and it was natural that elementary education should, even in day schools at first, comprise only such rudiments of instruction as enabled the scholars to read the Holy Scriptures."⁴

Following close upon the Sunday schools, and like them drawing

¹ Quoted in *History of English Elementary Education*, by F. Smith, p. 49.

² Manchester Statistical Society's Report on the State of Education in the Borough of Manchester in 1834.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁴ *Public Education*, by Kay-Shuttleworth, p. 34.

their inspiration from religion, came the two great societies, which for so many years provided day schools for the poor. The Royal Lancasterian Association, founded in 1809, which two years later became "The British and Foreign School Society," was a society formed to aid non-sectarian schools organized on the system of Joseph Lancaster, and the "National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church" was connected with Dr. Bell. Manchester benefited early from the efforts of both of these societies.

The Royal Lancasterian Free School in Manchester opened in 1809.¹ William Neild was chairman, and Dr. Dalton and John Owens—later to found Owens College—were members of the committee. Here seven hundred boys and three hundred girls, of all religious denominations, were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and the girls needlework. There were two masters and one mistress, and the 1,000 children were all taught in one room. It was only the use of the monitorial system that made this possible. The first school of the National Society was in Granby Row, founded in 1812 largely owing to Canon Wray's² exertions. Two hundred and eighty boys and one hundred and fifty girls were taught on Dr. Bell's system, reading, writing and arithmetic. The girls were taught needlework for an extra payment of 1d. a week.

Another pioneer in education, Robert Owen, had lived and worked in Manchester, and five infant schools—one was private—were founded in Manchester on the model of his school in New Lanark between 1825 and 1832.

A change had come over the attitude of the governing classes towards the problem of the education of the poor since the early years of the century. Although there was no suggestion, except by some writers like James Mill, and by some Radicals like Roebuck, that there was any natural right to education, the fact that the French Revolution had not been followed by a similar upheaval here, in spite of the popularity of some of its underlying ideas, had confirmed men in their belief that knowledge of the "three R's", especially if it was closely bound up with religious teaching and in the hands of religious people, was a safeguard rather than a solvent

¹ In Lever Street, and then in 1814 it moved to Marshall Street, Oldham Road.

² See above, p. 32.

of society. The industrial system, which was rapidly making England—and incidentally—their selves richer and richer every year, seemed so immensely good to anyone who could appreciate the workings of the laws of political economy, that to understand must be to admire. They were convinced that demands for higher wages resulting in "turnouts," and the bread riots that accompanied the constant commercial crises of the early 'thirties and 'forties, arose from ignorance on the part of the workers. "Knowledge is the bulwark of the state, and the rights of the rich and the poor are one, when rightly understood."¹

This argument might convince reluctant taxpayers, but it could never have driven men like William Neild, Richard Cobden, Thomas Potter and other successful Manchester business men to give time and money to the cause of popular education. More influential with them was the motive that made Dr. Kay give up his medical profession and, by way of a Poor Law Commissioner, become the first secretary of the Committee of the Privy Council for Education. He and his group of Manchester friends were deeply religious men. As members of the Board of Health formed to combat the cholera on its first appearance in 1831, they had seen something of the lives of the submerged masses, on whose labours their fortunes were built. They could not but feel that it was a disgrace to a country calling itself Christian, that little children should grow up in these conditions and unable even to read the Bible. Some of these men were already maintaining schools. Cobden had one near his works at Sabden Bridge. Thomas Potter and Benjamin Heywood supported schools near their homes at Irlams o'th'Height, and the latter ran one also in Miles Platting. Others, like William Neild, were associated with the Lancasterian school. Strong churchmen, like the Birley family, who gave much money and more time to found and manage schools, the Rev. Hugh Stowell and Canon Richson, who worked untiringly for education, expected the day school to be, like the Sunday school, the nursery of the Church.

The first sign of interest in education on the part of the Government was a grant of £20,000 given in 1833 for building schools. It was distributed through the two societies on the basis of a pound for every pound raised by voluntary contributions. This

¹ Quoted in *History of English Elementary Education*, by Frank Smith, p. 147.

was followed by an inquiry into the state of education in the large towns. When this report was published, members of the newly formed Statistical Society in Manchester¹ felt that it was inaccurate as regarded their town, and so they set to work in 1834 to make a survey of their own. This report on Manchester was sent to the committee of the House of Commons which was considering the state of education, and attracted so much attention that similar inquiries were carried out in other parts of the country.

The Manchester committee of inquiry found that there were eight different kinds of schools:

- (1) Endowed schools.
- (2) Infant schools.
- (3) Dame schools.
- (4) Common day schools.
- (5) Superior private schools.
- (6) Evening schools.
- (7) Sunday schools, and one Mechanics' Institute.

(1) *Endowed schools* (21).—The chief of these was the Manchester Grammar School, at this date an entirely free school for 200 boys. Chetham's Hospital, and six charity schools, maintained by endowments, supplemented in some cases by the offertory money from the churches with which they were connected, came also under this description.

Here also came the big schools, namely the Lancasterian (1809) for 1,000 boys and girls, Granby Row National School (1812) for 430 boys and girls, St. George's Hulme National School (1832) for 170 boys and girls, the New Jerusalem Day School (1827) for 200 boys, the Scotch Church Day School (1834) for 130 boys and girls, a Catholic Charity Day School for 400 children of both sexes, and one, founded in 1834, by the Mechanics' Institute.

The two schools for the workhouse children, who made pins in the morning and attended the school taught by paupers in the afternoon, were also included in this classification. About half of the endowed schools were free, in the others there were weekly fees, usually 2d. for reading, 4d. for reading and writing, and 5d. for reading, writing and arithmetic.

¹ See above, p. 35.

(2) *The four infant schools* to which reference has already been made were supported by one or other of the churches or by the Friends, and one, in Chorlton-on-Medlock, by public subscriptions.

The typical infant school of that day was "a large room with a gallery at one end where the whole body of scholars could assemble for a 'simultaneous lesson' or by repetition. At other times the floor was used for teaching smaller drafts of scholars, and monitors were used to a small extent for the more mechanical tasks. But the gallery lesson¹ was the chief medium of instruction."²

In these infant schools the pupils paid 2d. a week as a flat rate. The curriculum consisted of the three R's, with religion and morals—separate subjects, and in some cases natural history and geography. The number of scholars averaged 130, but there was only one mistress in each. The investigator had nothing but praise for these schools, and said that "their design and management are excellent and their general utility likely to be very great," and that "the thing most to be wished for children of this early age is, that infants' schools should gradually supplant the old Dame Schools, and be established on so large a scale, throughout every part of the Borough, as to afford accommodation for all children of an age to receive instruction there."³

The next three kinds of schools—the dame school, common day schools and superior private schools—were all what we should call private schools to-day. That is to say, the man or woman who ran them had to make his living from the fees.

(3) *Dame schools*.—These were the worst and the most numerous of all the schools in the town. "These schools are generally found in very dirty, unwholesome rooms—frequently in close, damp cellars, or old dilapidated garrets. In one of these schools eleven children were found in one small room, in which one of the children of the mistress was lying in bed ill with the measles. Another child had died in the same room of the same complaint a few days before. In another school all the children to the number of twenty, were squatted upon the bare floor there being no benches,

¹ There are still infant schools in Manchester with the "gallery" in what is now the hall, although it is no longer used for teaching.

² *History of English Elementary Education*, by Frank Smith, p. 96.

³ Manchester Statistical Society's Report, 1834, p. 16.

chairs, or furniture of any kind in the room. The Master said his terms would not yet allow him to provide forms, but he hoped that as his school increased, and his circumstances thereby improved, he should be able, sometime or other to afford this luxury."¹

Most of these were kept, as the name implies, by women, but there were some kept by old men, "whose only qualification for this employment seems to be their unfitness for every other."² Fees varied from 2d. to 7d. a week, 4d. being the average. The average yearly receipts were about £17 1s. 6d. per school. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that many of the teachers had other occupations, such as shop-keeping, sewing, washing, and that the children gained little from attendance, except that they were taken care of.

In some of these schools no books were provided and the children depended upon the chance that one of them would bring a book from home. In the majority only one or two books were found. "One of the best of these schools," say the committee, "is kept by a blind man, who hears his scholars their lessons, and explains them with great simplicity. He is, however, liable to interruption in his academic labours as his wife keeps a mangle, and he is obliged to turn it for her."³

Over 4,700 children, about half of whom were under five years of age, were found attending these schools. That meant that 11 per cent of the total number of children between the ages of five and fifteen attending school were pupils of whom "the vast majority receive no instruction which is at all deserving of the name."

(4) *Common day schools.*—There were 116 for boys and 63 for girls, but this division was merely on paper, as in most of the schools the sexes were mixed. Altogether there were 7,000 children attending them. Fees varied from 3d. to 1s. 6d. a week, the average being 6d. and 9d.⁴ The committee reports that these were, on the whole, rather better than the dame schools, but "still very little

¹ Manchester Statistical Society's Report, 1834, p. 6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6, note.

⁴ The pupils came chiefly from the families of mechanics, warehousemen and small shopkeepers, and as the age range in the dame schools was from 2 and 3 to 10, and in the common schools there were some children under 5, it was probably the parents who wished for a better education for their children than that of reading only, and who could afford to pay higher fees, who sent them to the common day schools.

fitted to give a really useful education to the children of the lower classes." The masters were hardly ever qualified for the work, and their average receipts were between 16s. and 17s. a week.

The three R's was the staple education, but in a few of the better schools a little grammar, geography and history was taught. "Religious Instruction is seldom attended to, beyond the rehearsal of a catechism, and moral education, real cultivation of mind and improvement of character, are totally neglected. Morals, said one master, in answer to the enquiry whether he taught them: 'Morals! How am I to teach morals to the like of these?' " But other masters were more boastful. "One of these," reports the committee, "who was especially conscious of the superior excellence of his establishment, as soon as he was acquainted with the object of the visit, began to dilate upon the various sciences with which he was familiar; among which he enumerated Hydraulics, Hydrostatics, Geography, Geology, Etymology and Entomology. It was suggested to him that they had better take the list of queries in their order. On coming to the subjects taught in the school, he was asked: 'Do you teach reading and writing? Yes. Arithmetic? Yes. Grammar and Composition? Certainly. French? Yes. Latin? Yes. Greek? Yes, yes. Geography? Yes,' etc., and so on until the list of queries was exhausted, answering every question in the affirmative. As he concluded the visitor remarked: 'This is *multum in parvo*, indeed!' to which the Master immediately replied: 'Yes, I teach that. You may put that down too.' "¹

The committee met with two instances of schools kept by masters of some ability, but much given to drinking, who had, however, gained such a reputation in "their neighbourhood, that after spending a week or a fortnight in this pastime, they could always fill their schoolroom again as soon as they returned to their posts. The children during the absence of the masters go to other schools for the week, or play in the streets, or are employed by their parents in running errands, etc. On another occasion one of the instructors and guardians of the morals of our youth was met issuing from his schoolroom at the head of his scholars to see a fight in the neighbourhood; and instead of stopping to reply to any educational queries, only issued a breathless invitation to come and see the sport."²

¹ Manchester Statistical Society's Report, p. 8, note.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10, note.

The committee summed up its opinion of these schools by saying that the confusion that arose from the absence of any order and system, the low qualifications of the master, large numbers of children to each teacher, great deficiency of books, etc., "render them nearly inefficient for any purposes of real education." The girls' schools were found to be in much better condition than the boys'.

(5) *Superior private and boarding schools.*—There were 114 of these with 2,934 children, but the committee did not attempt to give any opinion on the education. The fees are not given, but on the principle of paying for each subject separately they must have been quite high. In addition to the three R's, grammar, natural history, drawing, mathematics (boys), needlework (girls), languages and morals were taught in most of them, and at least half of them used maps and globes. It would have been one of these schools in Oldham Street that Ada, in *The Manchester Man*, attended.

This concluded the provision of day-time education in the town. There were, however, two other methods by which some children and young people could learn the rudiments.

(6) *Evening schools*, of which there were 86 with 1,458 scholars. The majority of these students were between fourteen and eighteen years of age, although there were some adults and some younger children. "They are," says the Report, "generally more effective than other schools, as none attend them who do not wish to learn, and who are not of an age to appreciate the advantages."¹ The fees were usually higher than for day schools, and the same masters taught in both.

For adult education there was the Mechanics' Institute, established in 1824, for which the committee had nothing but praise. "People of all ages, rank, situation and pursuits take advantage of the classes and lectures," and their only criticism is that the subjects and the manner of teaching are hardly likely to "instruct the lower orders—the really labouring classes of the community."² There were at this date 1,200 members, many under eighteen years of age, who paid an annual subscription of £1, and about half of the members attended the evening classes. A library with 2,600 volumes, a reading-room and a theatre for lectures were all in the building.

¹ Manchester Statistical Society's Report, p. 12.

² Ibid., p. 15.

Finally there were Sunday schools, to which we have already referred.¹

Although the committee realized that, apart from religious knowledge, little else was taught in the Sunday schools, they felt that owing to the large attendance, the moral effect upon the children of the habits of cleanliness and regularity, and the strong bond that was formed between the teachers from church and chapel and the children, lasting often all through their lives, these schools were the most important educational influence in the town, which was so lamentably deficient in any proper provision for day-time schooling. Another great advantage of the Sunday school was the high ratio of teachers. Many of the most devoted social workers of that time threw themselves into this work, and there was one teacher to every eleven pupils.

The results of this inquiry can be summarized as follows:²

There were 50,000 children between the ages of five and fifteen.³

There were in attendance at dame schools	4,722
There were in attendance at common day schools	6,790
There were in attendance at superior private schools	2,934
There were in attendance at infant schools	649
There were in attendance at endowed schools	3,566
<hr/>	
	18,661

But if the children under five and over fifteen are subtracted, the inquiry showed that only 28 per cent of all children of school age were attending a day school. Of the 33,000 scholars on the books of the Sunday schools, 23,000 received Sunday school instruction only. Taking all the figures together, only 56 per cent of all the children between five and fifteen were receiving day-time instruction of any sort, and of this number more than half were only receiving Sunday school instruction.

¹ In 1817 a woman, Catherine Prescott, died, aged 108. When she was 100 she had learnt to read at the Sunday school, which later became the most famous of all the Manchester Sunday schools, St. Paul's, Bennett Street.

² All the statistics refer to the Parliamentary borough which was larger than the municipal borough. The latter had not been formed at the time of the inquiry.

³ It is interesting that the members of this committee considered 15 to be the age to which instruction should be continued.

Such was the state of education in Manchester in 1834. Investigations into Salford, Bury and Liverpool followed in the next few years, and Manchester appeared to be rather worse than these other towns in her day-school provision, although better in that of Sunday schools. But what struck the committee of the Statistical Society more than anything was the contrast between all these places and education abroad. In Prussia, in several other German states, in Holland, and in Switzerland conditions were very different. "In Prussia all children between 7 and 14 are obliged to attend school, and from statistical returns it appears that they do so. Schools are carefully provided in every district, and placed under the superintendence of a Master who has himself been educated for the profession."¹ They also found a much more liberal curriculum. Whereas "no school is allowed to exist which does not teach, in an effectual manner, Religion, Reading, Writing and Singing," every complete elementary school taught in addition "the German language, elements of Geometry, Drawing, Arithmetic, elements of Natural Science, Geography, General History (particularly the history of the country), Gymnastic exercises, and simple forms of manual labour." They contrast this wealth of subjects with the bare three R's in England which, they say, "seems to be considered as constituting the finished education of the children of the lower classes of the people."²

Although the religious impulse had, as we saw, been the motive force behind the provision of such education as we possessed, character training and moral instruction were sadly deficient in the majority of schools. The investigators realized that although the indifference and poverty of parents were in some measure responsible, no improvement could be expected until there was a body of well-educated and trained teachers. There was not at this date a single Teachers' Training College in the whole of England. Until 1840, when the Battersea Training College was founded privately by Kay-Shuttleworth and Tufnell, no teachers in English or Welsh schools had received any special education for their work, and only a very moderate amount of learning was required by the managers of the National and British schools. At this time, too, "there was no organized system of inspection, no inspector, no published

¹ Manchester Statistical Society's Report, p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

reports on the state of the schools assisted by the State, and very little assistance ever granted."¹

Abroad, the profession of schoolmaster was one of skill and selection, here it was the refuge of the unsuccessful of all other occupations. Macaulay, who unlike the authors of a statistical study felt no need for moderation in his language, describes the English schoolmasters as "the refuse of all other callings, discarded footmen, ruined pedlars, men who cannot write a common letter without blunders, men who do not know whether the earth is a sphere or a cube, men who do not know whether Jerusalem is in Asia or America. And to such men, men to whom none of us would entrust the key of his cellar, we have entrusted the mind of the rising generation, and with the mind of the rising generation, the freedom, the happiness, the glory of our country."²

Laissez-faire was no policy for education, and State help, in the opinion of these men, was essential. "Whilst—abroad—the Governments provide an ample supply of good efficient teachers, in England absolutely nothing is done either by government, or by any other body for this purpose."³ And their final summing-up of the position shows how urgently they felt the need of Government interference: "It has been the common boast in England, that in her public undertakings the co-operation of private individuals has effected greater wonders, than all the wealth and power of governments in foreign countries. In this great work of national education, there is most assuredly no ground for such a boast. Private benevolence has effected something, but its efforts shrink into hopeless insignificance when compared with those of the governments of the German States. Indeed it is not possible, in any country, to obtain from the conflicting interests and opinions of private individuals that extent and unity of purpose, which is necessary for the establishment of so vast a system, as that which should provide a good and suitable education for every child of the State."⁴ They ask that as a first step a Board of Public Instruction should be set up.

We have given this account of education in Manchester in considerable detail, because it was practically unaltered by 1838.

¹ "Condition of Poor Children in English and German Towns," by Joseph Kay, Manchester Statistical Society, 1853.

² House of Commons, April 19, 1847.

³ Manchester Statistical Society's Report on Education in Liverpool, 1835, p. 42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 42 and 43.

Four years after the Report was published the only addition made to the glaring deficiency was some factory schools, established in connection with the cotton mills. In 1833 a Factory Act was passed¹ under which children between the ages of nine and thirteen were to have two hours' daily schooling,² in addition to eight hours in the mill. But the State provided neither money nor qualified teachers, and the employers, even the best of them, seemed to have felt little responsibility beyond complying with the law. In the *Manchester Guardian* of 1836 the following advertisement was inserted by McConnel & Company, Ancoats, one of the leading cotton-spinning firms:

"Wanted a Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress to superintend the education of children between 9 and 13 years of age employed in the mills of McConnel & Company, Ancoats. One penny in the shilling will be deducted from the working wages of each child to pay for the schooling; and from 200 to 300 children will probably be employed, whose wages will average 2/6 to 3/- per week. The payment will be guaranteed by the employers. One third only of the children will be in the school at the same time: and the hours of attendance will be from ten to twelve, noon, and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. The employers will contribute an additional yearly sum if the instructors are efficient. It is intended to connect an evening school with the establishment for persons above 13 years of age, and for adults, the receipts of which, after deducting disbursements of light, heat, etc., will go to the schoolmaster and schoolmistress. The system of education taught in the sessional school, Edinburgh, will be preferred."

Where the mill owners took a personal interest and especially where they did not exact the full eight hours' work at the mill from the children, some of these schools were good; others were merely established to comply with the Act of Parliament. Unless

¹ The Health and Morals of Apprentices Act of 1802, which limited hours to twelve in the day, and for which the Manchester Dr. Percival was largely responsible, had urged also that the apprentices should be taught the three R's during their working time by a master or mistress paid by the employers, but the Act had been largely inoperative.

² In 1844 another Factory Act extended the period to three hours and made parents as well as employers responsible for seeing that the children attended. The minimum age of employment was lowered to eight years instead of nine. These provisions were extended to non-textile factories and workshops in 1864 and 1867 (Birchenough: *History of Elementary Education*, p. 84).

the children attended for two hours daily they were not entitled to a certificate and could not be employed. The Factory Inspector preferred a good school to a bad one but, so long as the law was complied with, he had no power to say anything, and only the mere form of school attendance could be enforced.

The factory schools, therefore—and the requirement as to education only applied to children in textile factories—cannot have added much of value to the educational provision in Manchester, but until 1870 they were all that could be described as a state enforced system.

The inquiry had certainly roused interest in Manchester, and in the thirty years that followed a large public meeting of all parties and all sects which had advocated a national system of education in 1837, Manchester gave birth to eight different associations.¹ The bitter sectarian controversy was fought out in the city during these years and, thanks largely to Canon Richson, the compromise of 1870 was reached in Manchester before the rest of the country was ready for it.²

The necessity for compulsory as well as for free education was shown by the experience of the Manchester Education Aid Society, which was founded in 1864 to pay the school pence of poor children. Although over 2,000 children were sent to school by its help, only 50 per cent of the free grants were taken up by the parents. Agitation all over the country had now been going on for some years, and the Government could no longer ignore the question. Forster's Bill, when first introduced, was found to have been largely influenced by his experience in connection with the Manchester Education Aid Society's Bill which he and Mr. Bruce had sponsored.

As a result of the controversy, facts about education in Manchester were given in evidence before a Parliamentary Committee by Canon Richson in 1853. Comparing this with the inquiry of the Statistical Society, we find that whereas school attendance in 1834

¹ The Manchester Society for Promoting National Education (1837); The Manchester Church Education Society (1844); The Lancashire Public Schools Association, later the National Public Schools Association (1847); The Manchester and Salford Committee on Education (1851); The General Committee on Education (1857); The Manchester Education Aid Society (1864); A branch of the National Education League (1869); The National Education Union (1869).

² Between 1850 and 1870 Bills were promoted in Parliament by one or other of the Manchester societies.

was 9·5 per cent of the population of the borough, or one in eleven, in 1851 it had actually fallen to 7·3 per cent, or one in fourteen.¹ An estimate was made of the children between three and fifteen who were neither at school nor at work. It was found that out of 99,000 children of these ages, 42 per cent were neither at school nor at work. There was only one bright spot in this investigation: the number of children attending private schools—which included dame schools and common day schools—had decreased, and the numbers attending the Church of England and other denominational schools had increased since 1834.

The task of providing schools and making them available to all children was only one part of the problem. Unless children were protected by legislation against employers and parents, it was impossible to offer them schools, even if they were free. Since 1844, children could be employed in textile factories when they were eight years old and their hours were limited to six and a half a day, the beginning of the half-time system, but there were no limitations on their employment in non-textile factories and workshops, or warehouses and offices.

In Manchester, children of nine, ten, eleven and even six years old were working twelve, thirteen and sometimes fifteen hours a day. The managing partner in a firm of paper stainers gave evidence and said: "The children do work a great deal too long. From 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. is much too long, and that is the case for by far the greater portion of the year. They could not, when they are working these hours, go to school, even if they would. We work on, with no stoppage for meals, so that the day's work of 10½ hours is finished by 4.30 p.m. and all after that is overtime, and we seldom leave off working before 6 p.m. so that we really work overtime the whole year round."²

In the manufacture of lucifer matches in Newton Heath, a boy of fifteen, who had been employed there since he was nine, was at the factory by four o'clock in the summer, five o'clock in the winter, and as he lived in Manchester, had a walk of three-quarters of an hour to and from work. He usually stayed until 6 p.m. Some

¹ Joseph Kay, brother of Kay-Shuttleworth, in his paper to the Statistical Society on the "Condition of Education of Poor Children in English and German Towns" (1853), says, that in Switzerland one in five, in Germany one in six, of the population was attending school, and attending regularly, for six or seven years.

² Children's Employment Commission, 1867, Reports 1 and 2.

of these children had been to a school before they went to work, and some of them went to Sunday school. It is hardly surprising that most of them had forgotten all they had learnt, including a child of eleven, who said that she had been to school in Blackburn from the time that she was four, and that when she was seven she had had seven children to teach "because there was only one teacher." She could still count a little, but did not remember what 7 and 7 were.¹

Conditions such as these were general all over the country, and as a result of the revelations of this inquiry the Workshop Regulations Act, 1867, forbidding the employment of children under eight, and requiring children to attend school for ten hours every week between the ages of eight and twelve, was passed. Unfortunately, the administration of this Act, unlike that of the Factory Acts, was given to the local health authority, and the Manchester Council did not think it necessary to give the newly appointed Medical Officer of Health any staff to see that it was carried out.² It was, perhaps, not surprising that few children in the Manchester workshops were found in half-time attendance at school.

Three years later an inquiry revealed the disquieting fact that there were only 869 children attending school under the various Factory Acts. Practically all of these came from thirty-eight factories, but as there were 3,000 works that came under the Workshops Regulation Act of 1867, there ought to have been many children between eight and thirteen who should have attended. The Factory Acts were said to be well enforced and the reason for so few children attending school under these Acts seems to have been that most employers preferred to employ young persons rather than children because of the restrictions on the employment of the latter. The Workshops Act was reported not to be enforced, for the reasons just mentioned. If the Act were enforced, the Inspector was sure that the same result would follow as in the case of the factories. Children would be dismissed and "young persons" employed instead, as there was a plentiful supply of such labour. "The educational clauses, in short, of recent Labour Acts have, in Manchester, had no appreciable effect whatever."³

¹ Children's Employment Commission, 1867, Reports 1 and 2.

² Council Minutes, October 16, 1868.

³ House of Commons returns of the Schools for the Poorer Classes, 1870. D. Fearon's Report on Manchester.

But Manchester was rapidly becoming less of a manufacturing and more of a commercial city, and there were unlimited opportunities for the employment of children outside the scope of both the Factory and Workshop Acts, in offices, warehouses, shops, etc. The employment of these children was entirely unregulated as regards minimum age, hours of work, and attendance at school, and only a minority of parents appreciated education enough to make the necessary sacrifices to get it for their children.

On the eve of the introduction of the 1870 Bill, a Government inquiry showed that, although there was provision in Manchester in schools of some sort for 59 per cent of the school population, actually only 45 per cent attended. The position had certainly improved in the thirty-six years, the schools were better and the numbers attending larger, but there were no grounds for complacency and no one who knew the facts was prepared to defend the position.

Meanwhile what had been happening to the schools themselves around which all this controversy raged?

When the first Government grant was given in 1833 it was distributed through the two religious societies, the National Society for the Church schools and the British and Foreign School Society for the Nonconformists. The only condition was that for each pound from the Government there should be a pound from local subscriptions and fees. There were no requirements with regard to buildings or maintenance of the premises, and no inspection.

Dr. Kay had been appointed¹ the first secretary of the Committee of the Privy Council to administer this grant. During the ten years that he occupied the position he laid the foundation of our national system. He realized first of all the immense value of inspection by the central authority, and in 1841 this right was won after a stiff battle with the churches. Compromise was effected on the basis of inspectors for each denomination, recommended by that denomination but appointed by the Committee of Council. His next concern was to get a body of properly educated and trained teachers and for that training colleges were necessary. Although the opposition of the churches defeated his attempt to found a State Training College, Government grants made possible the establishment of denominational training colleges. In 1846 the

¹ In 1839.

famous Minutes of Council were issued under which a grant was available for the first time to pay the stipends of pupil teachers and to augment the salaries of the schoolmasters who taught them. Selected pupil teachers, who pursued their own studies under the headmaster after school hours, gradually replaced monitors, who were children of twelve or thirteen paid 1s. a week to help the overworked teacher. These pupil teachers competed for the scholarships to the various training colleges and the successful ones were known as Queen's Scholars. At the end of the course there was an examination for the certificate, which was granted after two years' probation as teachers. Schools which employed these certificated teachers received an extra grant. Thus the foundation of a profession was at last laid in England.

From the reports of the various inspectors of the Committee of Council we can get some idea of the Manchester schools. All but eight of the voluntary schools¹ in Manchester received grants from the Government, and the teaching in the schools had improved considerably since the Statistical Society painted so depressing a picture of the conditions in 1834.

The Rev. J. Kennedy, the inspector of Church schools in this district, saw a great improvement in the years between 1848 and 1861, "almost," he writes, "like life from the dead." There had been a great increase of schools, and only one had stopped employing certificated teachers, in two out of its three departments. From his experience of these years he was convinced that there were many children for whom free education was essential, and he speaks approvingly of the district of St. Philip's, Hulme, where, in addition to large boys' and girls' schools and two infant schools, the managers had a free school for the necessitous poor, under a master with a first-class certificate.² The difficulty of ensuring that the free schools were not abused had been settled in that parish by the arrangement that when the parents got into arrears with school fees, the children

¹ Some schools refused the grant as they did not want inspection. From the Minute Books of St. Paul's, Bennett Street, Infants' Day School we find that it was not until 1866 that the school decided to accept a Government grant, in consequence of which it had to give three months' notice to the head mistress, as a certificated mistress would henceforth have to be employed. One was appointed at £45 a year. In those days the teachers themselves collected the school pence which went towards their salary, the deficit being made up by the managers.

² This was maintained by the Bitley family.

had to go to the free school. Also, if the parents of children attending the free school got good work, they had to send their children to the pay school. "The system," he reports, "appears to work admirably," but more, we feel, from the point of preventing any child who could afford to pay from getting a free education than from the point of view of the child's education. In spite of the real improvement, he feels that there is no general enthusiasm for education, and that the progress so far as the Church schools is concerned, is due most of all to the Birley family. "Five Churches and six admirable sets of schools are monuments of their unostentatious labours and liberality, not to speak of the extensive free school, the large night school, and other schools which I have found carried on and supported entirely by them. Except the labours and benefactions of Mr. W. Colton, in the district of Bethnal Green, I have never heard of anything equal to what has been done by the Manchester gentlemen I have named."

The Roman Catholic schools which, in 1857,¹ were much fewer in number and less well staffed than those in Liverpool and Wigan, had improved so much by 1870 that the inspector said that Manchester and Salford now enjoyed the advantages of many excellent schools that could not anywhere be surpassed for efficiency. They had to meet a special difficulty, namely, that "the English will not attend school with the Irish, or the Irish with the English."

The inspector of the British schools was laudatory. Whether those schools in Manchester were, on the whole, better than the Church schools, we have no means of knowing. The two schools that win praises from successive inspectors are the New Jerusalem School, Peter Street, and Lower Mosley Street Boys' School. The former, originally a Swedenborgian foundation in small and inconvenient premises, had an attendance of 300 boys divided into seven classes, each, it is remarked, "furnished with a separate teacher besides a Head Teacher." "The most striking thing on entering is to see a schoolroom of which every square yard is actually occupied with scholars, and yet on walking round to find that there is not the slightest noise, confusion or interference of one class with another."²

The Lower Mosley Street Boys' School, said by the inspector

¹ Minutes of Committee of Council, 1856-57.

² Minutes of Committee of Council, 1857: Extract from J. D. Morell's Report.

to be "one of the most remarkable schools now existing in this part of the country," belonged to the Unitarians, and was one of the earliest of the Manchester schools to appoint certificated teachers and pupil teachers, in accordance with the conditions of Government grant in 1846.

There was, however, a general feeling that Government grants were not being applied as originally intended, which was to help the poorest children to get a good education. Inspectors and other investigators found that many of the poorest children were those whose parents did not appreciate the advantages of education, and would not even accept free schooling, or those whose families so desperately needed their earnings that they could not be spared for school. The children who did attend in large numbers were those whose parents could probably have afforded to pay more than 9d. a week, which was the limit for any school that received a Government grant.

"Teachers are, of course, only too glad to fill their schools with such children . . . profiting by them in every way, first by the higher school fee, next by the Government grant, pecuniarily therefore in the first instance, secondly, by the great benefit of attracting to their school pupils from decent and comfortable homes, far easier to manage, quicker to learn, and surer to pass in the examination. . . . They (the teachers) looked askance on children for whom, while their truancy, their raggedness, their roughness, their rawness, and their utter ignorance demanded much greater efforts of patience, kindness and all the resources of the humanest and cleverest teacher, they were paid infinitely less."¹

When fees formed half the income of the school and therefore of the salaries of the teachers, when there was no scale of salaries, so that a school with poorer children could pay lower salaries than one with better class children, when there was no local control over the schools, and the various bodies started schools wherever they liked and openly competed for scholars, uniformity of treatment of school, teacher and pupil was an impossibility. But free education with all the simplification that it brought with it was not achieved for another thirty years.

We refer elsewhere² to the building of the Swinton schools for

¹ Minutes of Committee of Council, 1866-67. Report of E. H. Brodie.

² See below, pp. 319-323.

the workhouse children, hitherto kept in the mixed workhouse. It brought forcibly home to the citizens of Manchester the fact that Canon Richson had urged as an argument for rate aid, namely, that the pauper children were enjoying a much better education than the child of the self-supporting working man. At Swinton there was one trained teacher to every twenty-one children, whilst in the National and British schools there was only one teacher to a number varying between thirty-six and seventy-seven children. The curriculum was much broader, too, including vocal and instrumental music, drawing, mechanics and "Industrial employment and industrial habits" (needlework and knitting for girls). This school received grant from the Committee of Council, and the inspector's report was lyrical. "The ratepayers of Manchester have evinced a liberality, that almost might be termed boundless, in the erection of these magnificent buildings, which are, beyond question, the finest educational establishments for the benefit of the poorest classes that have as yet been set on foot in England."¹

But over and over again the inspectors, in their reports, return to the question of the poor and irregular attendance at the ordinary schools. In the Granby Row Boys' School the inspector found that, in the five months from March to August 1846, four-fifths of the children were admitted and three-fifths had left, so that only one-fifth had remained at school even for five months. Looking back now it is difficult to understand why there was still in 1870 so much opposition to compulsory attendance that the Act only empowered School Boards to make by-laws enforcing it, and that ten years more had to elapse before compulsion was imposed upon the whole country by Act of Parliament.

During the years before 1870 there had been an event of great moment for the educational world. The Newcastle Commission, appointed in 1858 to investigate the state of education in England, reported in 1861: and its recommendation that part of the grant should in future be paid on the results of an examination of each child in the three R's was adopted by the Committee of Council. "Payment by results," so much in harmony with the triumphal materialism of the times, especially when the public was undergoing one of its periodical fits of alarm at the expenditure on education,² seemed to these Commissioners the only way to

¹ Minutes of Committee of Council on Education, 1846, vol. ii.

² £500,000.

ensure both that the amount of public money should be reduced, and that the teachers did their work properly. They sympathized with the teachers of private schools, who complained that they were being undersold by the State-aided schools. "In our opinion," the report says, "the complaint is well founded. We think that the assistance given by the State to education should assume the form of a bounty, paid upon the production of certain results by any person whatever. We consider it unfair to exclude the teachers of private schools from a share in this bounty, if they can prove that they have produced the results."¹

Fortunately, the Government, which for years had been giving grants in order to encourage the efficient, trained teacher, realized that this would be a complete reversal of its policy, but it saw nothing wrong in applying commercial principles to teachers trained under its own auspices who were, under innumerable difficulties, trying to civilize as well as to teach the children committed to their care.

The Revised Code of 1861 provided that instead of extra grants to certificated teachers and additional grants for teaching pupil teachers, only one grant should in future be paid, and that direct to the managers, who were at liberty to pay any salaries that they liked. Grants could only be earned by children under eleven, as it was held that if the teachers did their work properly, any child could be taught the three R's by that age and that the working-class child needed no more education. Grants were dependent upon a certain number of attendances, combined with an examination by the Government inspector of every child in reading, writing and arithmetic. School managers were not slow to follow the Government's lead, and in most cases made the salaries of the teachers dependent upon the amount of grant earned by the school. On the new basis this grant was often less than it had been before.

This is not the place to discuss the disastrous effect of this policy—which was not reversed until 1897—and whose baneful influence is not yet completely eradicated. Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth saw the work to which he had devoted his life undermined; Matthew Arnold² pointed out that whereas inspection had formerly been directed towards testing and promoting the intellectual force of

¹ Quoted from Drury's *Manual of Education*, p. 30.

² An inspector of schools from 1851 to 1882.

the school, and all the subjects taught came under review, now each child had to be examined in the three R's separately, which involved an immense amount of routine labour on the part of the inspector and made the former type of helpful inspection impossible.

The Government inspector for Church schools in Manchester, the Rev. J. T. Kennedy, found that one result was a deterioration in the type of schoolmaster although, with so few alternate openings for women, the profession still drew good recruits from that sex. With regard to the men, he reports in 1867: 'It is my clear conviction that the masters of National Schools are as a class inferior to what they were a few years ago. Several things will account for this. Their emoluments and hopes are less, but their work is heavier, for now they are allowed and in many cases have been required to keep an evening school in addition to all their various labours in the morning and evening. The old masters are discontented with the Revised Code, and the new masters drawn into the profession are not equal to those who have been attracted to it between 1846 and the date of the Revised Code. There are exceptions, but, as a rule, attainments and refinement seem inferior, the aims and aspirations seem lower, and they work with less spirit and zest. The fact that the Schoolmasters' Associations for Mutual Counsel and Improvement are dissolving, as in Manchester, is one sign of the depressed spirit prevailing in the body.'¹

The effect on the school as a whole he found bad. 'I am frequently surprised and sorry to see how little value a master attaches to anything he may have taught his scholars for the sake of the intrinsic value of the instruction itself. Unless it pays, or comes out in some way at my inspection, the master seems to think his teaching to have been wasted. I have observed a teacher seem to think even his religious teaching thrown away unless brought into display at my inspection.'²

On the eve of the Education Bill of 1870 we have a picture of the state of education in Manchester³ which we can compare with that of 1834.

¹ Minutes of Committee of Council on Education, 1866-67: Report by the Rev. J. T. Kennedy.

² *Ibid.*

³ House of Commons returns of all schools for the poorer classes in Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool, 1870.

There were 79 schools, containing 163 day departments and 29 night departments, which were in receipt of Government grant and therefore under inspection, and 78 schools, with 94 day and 9 night departments, that were uninspected.

D. Fearon, who made the report on Manchester, divided these 78 uninspected schools into fit and unfit. The test of fitness was not a high one. It was a school which appeared to be free from gross, palpable defects, either (a) premises, (b) of the teacher, such as incapacity through age, infirmity or evident ignorance, (c) not proposing to teach the elements of reading, writing and arithmetic, or not having the materials and apparatus necessary for doing so. He explains that he has called a school "unfit" if it is kept in a cellar with no admission of light except through the doorway, or one in which no seats for the children are provided except on the staircase, or one in which the teacher is extremely old or paralytic, or one in which there are very bad reading-books or very few slates.

Out of the 90 departments he visited, he excluded 9 which, although the maximum fee was not above 1s. a week, he found were really middle-class schools. Of the rest, he found 37 unfit and 44 fit. The "unfit" schools had an average attendance of 1,407 and the "fit" an attendance of 3,595. Amongst the unfit, were schools with about 50 children of all ages under one teacher. One school, which proved itself unfit on all three counts, was held in two rooms of a private house. There were 52 children in a room 18 by 12 feet, and 30 children upstairs in a rather smaller room, mostly under seven. There was only one middle-aged master, who was trying to teach the children individually. "Disorder was great," reported Mr. Fearon. "They were packed so close and were so disorderly that to a stranger standing in the doorway they looked like a seething mass of children."¹

Another "unfit" school was held in a cellar, which was used as a day and sleeping room. It was very small and very dirty. "It opens into a back cellar which is dark and appears not to be paved; but it was impossible to explore it, as it seemed to be used as a privy." The master, a ragged Irishman, "had just been deserted by his wife, who was a weaver, and who could earn more by her trade than

¹ House of Commons returns of all schools for the poorer classes in Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool, 1870. Report on Manchester, by D. Fearon.

he by his school."¹ The private adventure school, in its worst manifestation, had not improved since 1834.

Of the schools which, though uninspected, were classed as "fit," Mr. Fearon said that "even the best of them are far inferior in these subjects (the three R's) to any fair, inspected school, and some are as bad in dictation as the obviously unfit schools previously described."²

One of the reasons for bad attendance, he said, was that parents who intended to send their children into the factory at ten or eleven, when they expected them to have to attend school half time, did not bother about providing them with any education beforehand. His conclusion was not flattering to Manchester. Although he found the education of the ordinary scholars in the inspected schools much better than that of those in the uninspected, he still found it of a low quality, below the average of the same age for the country. He examined over 700 individual children, and found that only two could pass the sixth standard, which a child who had been attending regularly since the age of five could pass when he was eleven. As for the instruction and discipline in the uninspected schools, they are "so bad that they are scarcely worth reckoning."

The inquiry covered Liverpool, Birmingham and Leeds as well as Manchester. As Birmingham had at that time about the same population as Manchester, we can compare the figures:

	Birmingham	Manchester
Estimated population in 1869	360,846	370,892
Children requiring elementary instruction (one-sixth of population)	60,141	61,815
Accommodation in inspected schools	23,627	35,573
Number on roll in inspected schools	25,203	31,003
Average attendance	16,053	23,250
Number on roll in uninspected schools	12,910	3,298
Actual attendance in uninspected schools	10,783	2,662
Number on roll in private schools, ragged schools, etc.	11,099	2,471

¹ House of Commons returns of all schools for the poorer classes in Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool, 1870. Report on Manchester, by D. Fearon.

² *Ibid.*

		Birmingham	Manchester
Actual attendance	.. .. ..	9,661	2,016
Number on roll of all schools	.. ..	49,212	36,772
Number on roll of all inspected schools	.. ..	25,203	31,000

This table shows that although Birmingham had made provision in some sort of school for a larger proportion of its children of school age than had Manchester, 82.5 per cent as against 59 per cent, the proportion of children on the roll of inspected schools was greater in Manchester than in Birmingham, namely 86 per cent, as against 51 per cent.

There was, too, some faint consolation in the fact that W. E. Forster, speaking in Parliament of the revelations of this inquiry, said: "I must add, however, that Manchester appears to be better than Liverpool in one respect: that there are fewer schools in which education is not worth having." But the fact remained that still only 45 per cent of the children of school age were attending any school. Lack of compulsion did not only mean that many children never saw the inside of a school, but that of those who did, their attendance was exceedingly irregular.¹

At the beginning of 1870 the City Council passed a resolution in favour of a State system of compulsory education in schools under local control, whether supported by the rates or taxes. When Forster's Bill was introduced, the Council appointed a sub-committee to consider it. It regretted that compulsion was not obligatory, that the Council was not to be the Education Authority, and that although it would be responsible for raising the School Board rate, it would have no authority over it.

The 1870 Act marked a great change in the attitude of the public towards the public provision of education.

Since 1833 State aid in the shape of Government grants had been given to stimulate voluntary efforts. Two-thirds of the cost was, by 1870, borne by voluntary subscriptions and school pence, and one-third by Government grants. There had been bitter sectarian struggles over the administration of these grants in the early days, and it was only the tact and administrative capacity of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth that avoided shipwreck in 1846, but although there were still uninspected schools in Manchester in 1870, only a small number of the children attending any school went to them. But the inadequacy of the school provision, not only in

¹ *Four Periods of Public Education*, by Kay-Shuttleworth, p. 568.

Manchester but throughout the country, proved that the system of voluntary effort supported by State aid had failed. There was no school of thought which proposed that the State should take over the whole cost, because there was still great distrust of State interference, particularly where religious questions were concerned. The alternative was rate aid in addition to voluntary subscriptions and school pence, but here also there was suspicion of the municipal councils, and outside the towns there was no elected body to which the new duty could be assigned. County councils were not set up until 1888.

The Government's solution was to set up *ad hoc* bodies. The School Boards were elected by the local government electors, but each elector had as many votes as there were members of the Board, and could distribute them as he pleased. This method of "plumping" meant that the different bodies interested in the elections—the denominationalists and the anti-denominationalists—could organize and make their votes much more effective than could have been done had each voter had only one vote. The result was that the elections were run entirely on the sectarian question and not on the educational qualifications of the candidates.

The country was divided into districts, coinciding in the towns with the borough areas, and an inquiry into the education needs was to be instituted. Where sufficient schools were found, there would be no interference with voluntary efforts, except that all the schools were to be open to inspection. Where the provision was insufficient—and the Education Department, through its inspectors, was to be the judge of insufficiency—six months were to be allowed to see if voluntary effort would supply the deficiency. If not, a School Board was to be set up and schools, built and maintained out of a special rate, the education rate, were to be provided. No aid from rates was to be given to denominational schools; the Government grants for building and enlargement, which had been in existence since 1833, were abolished, but the denominational schools were to receive a larger annual grant from taxes than the Board schools.

The question of making attendance compulsory between five and thirteen was left to School Boards, who were given power to pass by-laws to this effect, but, if so, they had to provide for exemptions on certain grounds for children between ten and

thirteen. Education was not made free, but School Boards were allowed to remit fees at their own schools, or to pay them from the rates to the voluntary schools for necessitous children and, with the consent of the Education Department, to establish free schools in certain cases. School Boards were free to decide whether there should be any religious teaching, but if so, it was to be undenominational, and a conscience clause, by which a child could be withdrawn from religious teaching, was to be enforced on all schools receiving grant from the Government. Managers of voluntary schools could transfer their schools to the Board. Any deficiency, after fees and Government grants had been calculated, was to be raised by the rating authority on the precept of the School Board for the maintenance of Board schools.

II

1870-1902

The second of the two periods into which we have divided the history of education in Manchester, consists of the thirty-two years of the life of the School Board.

A momentous decision had been taken when Parliament decided to keep the voluntary schools within the framework of the national system, although only, as it were, on the outskirts. Up to 1870 all the provision that existed had been made by voluntary bodies, with grants from the Government given to all schools that would agree to the necessary conditions. When rate aid as well as Government grants were found to be necessary, only schools maintained by the School Boards were to receive it. The voluntary schools were to continue to receive annual grants, but no more capital grants, and the accommodation provided by them had to be taken into account when a School Board decided whether or not the accommodation in any district was sufficient. We shall see the administrative difficulties that arose in this connection, and how the continual struggle of the voluntary schools to maintain their income from subscriptions, school pence and Government grant—although the latter was increased in 1897—resulted in the 1902 Act, which firmly established them as part and parcel of the national system.

Competition between them and the new Board schools built

out of the rates, and able to call upon the rates for any deficiency in maintenance charges, after school pence and Government grant had been calculated, was severe. The School Board in Manchester had a majority of Churchmen and Roman Catholics for the whole of its existence, and these members were elected primarily to see that the new Board schools which they had to manage did as little damage as possible to their own schools, in which many of them were naturally more interested. We can hardly wonder that questions which practically never raise their heads in a meeting of the Education Committee nowadays were the usual matters for discussion—and often bitter discussion—then.

In spite, however, of this ever-present irritant, great progress was made during this period, fundamental problems of administration were tackled, and the foundations laid upon which further advance could take place.

The problems which the School Board faced and largely solved were:

1. The provision of schools and their management.
2. The question of securing compulsory attendance of the children.
3. The question of school pence or fees.
4. The extension of the conception of elementary education.

1. Provision of Schools and their Management.

The Manchester Council lost no time in applying for a Board, and the first election, in which fifty-nine candidates stood for fifteen seats, took place on November 26, 1870. Out of an electorate of 62,000, in which women were entitled to vote for the first time, 26,513 voted. (Women had been given the municipal vote in 1869.)

The extreme bitterness of sectarian strife had spent itself in Manchester over the controversy of the 'fifties and 'sixties, and the Manchester Education Society supported thirteen candidates of all denominations for the School Board election. But the Church of England ran candidates also, and so did the Roman Catholics. The method of "plumping" resulted in two Roman Catholics¹ being at the top of the list. Next came an independent candidate, who had been supported by the Baptists,² then five Church of England

¹ Rev. Lawrence (later Canon) Toole and Mr. George Richardson,

² William Birch.

candidates,¹ who fought under the slogan of "Vote for Bible education, and save your rates"; then two Wesleyans² who, with these five, were all supported by the National Education Union, the Church of England organization. Miss Lydia Becker, the well-known suffragist, and for many years the only woman member of the Board, stood as an independent, and as a woman.³ Four men,⁴ including Dr. J. Watts who had been a strong secularist, all of whom stood for undenominational education, were also elected. Out of the fifteen members of the Board there were therefore nine who represented denominational interests, although no one could accuse the churchman, Mr. Herbert Birley, who was elected chairman and who held the position with an interval of three years until his death in 1890, of being a partisan chairman.

It was clear from the first that the Board was not very harmonious, and the administration of the Act provided plenty of opportunities for reviving the old quarrels. The majority of denominationalists was maintained throughout the thirty-one years of the School Board's existence.

A survey of existing accommodation by the School Board showed that there was a deficiency of 4,600 school places. The Government inspector, however, made out a deficiency of 8,282 places according to his definition of efficient accommodation.

The Board set to work to build schools to provide the needed accommodation, and Every Street and Vine Street were the first schools erected. But when any question of the provision of extra school accommodation by the Board arose, the proposal was fought by the voluntaryists on the ground (1) that there were sufficient places in existing denominational schools, (2) that the new Board schools would undersell existing and poorer Church and Roman Catholic schools, and (3) that it was a waste of the ratepayers' money to erect them. The fact that Mr. Birley, although a strong churchman and a supporter of voluntary schools, usually voted in opposition to the narrow Church party alone ensured educational progress.

¹ Herbert Birley, W. R. Callender, R. Gladstone, J. Lamb, T. Dale.

² J. Haworth and J. Cooper.

³ Women were not eligible to stand for municipal councils until 1907, although they could be members of Urban District Councils and of School Boards.

⁴ Rev. William McKerrow (Presbyterian), Robert Rumney, Dr. Watts and Oliver Heywood.

The first ten years, 1871-1881, saw the Board in possession of fourteen schools which it had built itself, twenty-one transferred to it by the managers of voluntary schools, and seven temporary premises, making a total accommodation for 24,900 children out of the 61,930 on the rolls. The majority of the children were attending voluntary schools.

At the beginning of its career the Board had given the schools under its control "managers" consisting of members of the School Board and others co-opted from outside. This system had, however, proved a failure, and all the Board schools were put under a sub-committee of the Education Committee, as is the present practice. An inspector was appointed,¹ and there was the usual outcry against "management by officials," but Mr. Birley replied that "the success which had attended the schools since they had been placed under official management was something very remarkable.² This inspector also, after considerable opposition, inspected the secular instruction in those voluntary schools where the Board paid the fees for necessitous children.

During the second ten years, 1881-1891, the problem of accommodation was intensified by the extension of the city in 1885, and again in 1890, to include areas with a deficiency of school places. The abolition of fees in 1891 also caused a rush of children into the schools, particularly in poor districts like Hulme. Voluntary schools were not increasing, and as many of these schools were finding it increasingly difficult to maintain themselves, a considerable number were handed over in this decade.

This period saw a complete reorganization of the evening schools under excellent and keen teachers, and with a much more flexible curriculum, and another interesting development was the provision of free breakfasts, and later free dinners. For some time before 1870 the charitable Mr. Birley had provided free breakfasts in the school of which he was manager, and in 1886 during a hard winter many other schools took up the work. The money was raised by voluntary efforts—school concerts, private subscriptions, etc. The teachers gave their services, and the School Board helped by inquiring into the needs of the children, and by lending the schools for the meals. They were provided only during the winter in bad times.

¹ In 1874.

² *Manchester Courier*, November 10, 1879.

During the last decade of this period the conception of the educational service was broadening. In 1893 an Act of Parliament gave School Boards the power to provide for blind and deaf children. Manchester immediately appointed a special committee to make arrangements with Henshaw's Blind Asylum, Old Trafford, and the Deaf and Dumb Schools, and was soon paying for 56 children, at the cost to the rates of £800. In 1899 two centres for physically and mentally defective children were opened under the permissive power of the Act of that year. The idea, too, of physical training and of the importance of school playgrounds developed. We find in 1893 a site of half an acre for 1,000 children, and one of an acre and a half for 1,100, and the School Board complimenting itself on the ample playgrounds. Seven years later they were taking two acres, and remarking with pride that that was more than the Board of Education required.

The last years of the School Board saw a more rapid extension of its work than at any other time, and when the Education Committee took over from the School Board (July 1903) there were 66 Provided or Board schools, of which 33 had been built since 1870, and the others transferred by voluntary bodies, with 53,674 children on the roll, and 89 non-provided or voluntary schools with 53,439 scholars. The children could hardly have been more evenly divided.

The increasing difficulties of the voluntary schools in the face of the rising cost of education, which meant that their supporters had to increase their subscriptions, as well as to pay the increasing School Board Rate, forced the Government in 1897 to give the voluntary schools an extra grant, aid grant, as it was called, on average attendance. But this was not enough, and the Manchester School Board, with its majority of representatives of voluntary schools, passed each year between 1895 and 1897 a resolution, regularly opposed by the minority, demanding that the voluntary schools should share in the Education Rate.

The following extract from a teacher's reminiscences gives some idea of work in a school at the beginning of this period—1876.

Nor were the scholars as a whole in any way superior to their surroundings. Rather the reverse, I fancy. With unwashed faces, with torn clothes or excuses for clothes, with the absence of shoes and stockings, often with starved and sickly bodies, they added still darker shades to a

grimy building. Schools and scholars partake of the nature of the district. Mills and workshops abound there, and the workers at them formed the greatest proportion of the population. Narrow streets and courts, over which hung a perpetual pall of smoke, housed the residents, and the poorness of the district was further attested by the paltry character of the shops. Even the plate-glass in the gin palaces seemed less brilliant than in the other parts of the city.

I have said the parish was a poor one. How poor appears inconceivable. Probably one-third of the children had their fees paid by the School Board and another third did not pay at all, or only occasionally. If the latter were sent home, in nine cases out of ten they did not return for some days, and we dare not resort to this means in examination times. Parents in many cases were drunken and improvident and took their children away from school immediately it was legal, putting them to the work that would bring the most money. They never gave a thought to the child's future. The standard of exemption being the fourth, we never had more than three or four in the sixth. . . .

There was no lack of candidates for the position of pupil-teacher early in the "seventies," and, after passing the sixth standard, I felt it a great honour, at the mature age of eleven and a half, to be selected to take charge of a class in Mount Zion School. The class numbered seven and consisted of children who were not to be examined in standard one owing to insufficient attendances, and it was relegated to a distant classroom in company with another company of the same size representing standard two. Here we passed the entire day for four months, with occasional brief visits from the headmaster. As long as we kept moderately quiet he was not particular what was done, seeing that all his energies were devoted to those preparing for examination. But I am afraid that we gave him a lot of trouble. The two teachers quarrelled more than once and fought, to the edification of their scholars; whilst, as the majority of the scholars were older and stronger than their masters, the task of keeping them orderly proved rather formidable. Several pitched battles ensued between teacher and scholar, in which the former had often to send hurriedly for his chief.¹

The Manchester School Board had at first followed a cheese-paring policy, and instead of encouraging its pupil teachers to go to college had kept them as assistant teachers at lower salaries. There was no training college in the city, but a day training department was opened at Owens College, first for men (1890) and then for women (1894).

¹ *Manchester City News*, April 4, 1891.

A Pupil Teacher Centre, which had often been discussed, was finally opened in the last decade of this period. Here the pupil teachers were taught together by a full-time staff. This was a great improvement on the system by which the head teacher used to teach them before and after school.

2. *Compulsory Attendance.*

It was, however, one thing to provide schools and quite another to get the children into them.

Parliament, as we saw, shrank from enforcing compulsory attendance, but it gave power to any School Board to do so if it wished.¹ Should it so decide, the Act laid down the limits within which compulsion could be applied, five to thirteen years. It also insisted that the by-laws should allow children between ten and thirteen to have either total or partial exemption if the child had passed—to the satisfaction of the Government inspector—a standard of education which was to be specified. In other words, exemptions must be allowed, but the standard at which they were allowed was left to each School Board, subject to confirmation by the Education Department.

London, Liverpool, and then Manchester were the first of the large School Boards to make such by-laws. Manchester fixed the standard of full-time exemption at the fourth standard, and allowed half-time exemption to any child who had reached Standard III. London fixed Standard V for full-time exemption, and half-time exemption only for those children who were proved to be "beneficially and necessarily at work for the maintenance of themselves or their parents." Manchester was divided into twelve districts, with one or more attendance officers for each, and five rota sub-committees, which dealt with parents who did not send their children to school regularly. If appearances before the Rota failed parents were prosecuted if the child had made *less than four-fifths* of the possible attendances in *the preceding four weeks*.

Evidently the Clerk to the Board and the teachers must have shown too much enthusiasm to sweep children into the schools, for the next year the Board decided that no prosecutions should take place, except with the written consent of two members of the

¹ In 1880 Mundella's Act made it compulsory for School Boards to make by-laws requiring the attendance of children.

Board,¹ and only when the child had made *less than half* the possible attendances in *any* four consecutive weeks. In 1875 the necessary attendances were raised to 68 per cent for girls and 75 per cent for boys, and later in the same year to 80 per cent for both sexes after a strong protest had been received from the committee of the Jews' School, which pointed out that the attendance at their school had actually diminished since the compulsory by-laws had come into force. It attributed this fact to the conflicting decisions of Rota Committees from week to week, and recommended that an experienced permanent official should assist the committees.

It is difficult for us to appreciate the immense revolution in the social habits of a very large section of the community involved by compulsory attendance. Seventy years ago children seldom went to school after they were ten. The Revised Code for 1861 contemplated that children would leave, fully educated, at eleven years of age. Although they could be employed at eight, most employers were coming to realize that the younger children were more bother than they were worth, and ten was becoming the more normal age of regular employment. At this age, therefore, children could contribute to the family earnings, but, more generally, the girls stayed at home and did the housework so that their mothers could go out to work. When compulsory attendance was introduced the family income suffered in two ways, by the loss of the boy's earnings until he could get full-time exemption, or by a reduction when he only got half-time exemption, and also by the loss of the mother's earnings, because the girls were kept at school. In a place like Manchester, where married women's work had always been the custom, the blow was particularly hard, and the School Board, which, after all, had to depend for successful prosecutions on a sympathetic bench of magistrates, evidently found that it must enforce its by-laws with discretion, but in the first year over six thousand extra children were brought into the schools, an increase in attendance of 26 per cent, and the attendance in Manchester compared favourably with that in Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield, although it was below that in Salford.

The battle for the child between industry and the school never raged so fiercely as during the forty-eight years between 1870 and the Fisher Act of 1918, which abolished half-time. Until com-

¹ School Board Minutes, January 27, 1893.

pulsion began, industry, with the exception of the Factory Acts, had had it all its own way, but after 1870 the school began slowly to pull the child back from the factory, workshop, office and shop. Parliament stepped in now and again, either by raising the age at which children could be employed, as in Lord Sandon's Act of 1876, when employment between ten and fourteen was prohibited, or by raising the standard at which exemption would be granted by by-law. But the prohibition of employment only applied to factories and workshops, and there were other ways by which children could earn. Also Lord Sandon's Act worked both ways, for it allowed a child to get exemption by means of having made a certain number of attendances, if he could not pass the examination for the labour certificate. This method of escape was known as the "Dunce's Pass," and remained for many years. The majority of Manchester children left school between twelve and thirteen. For the three years 1897-1900, 10.7 per cent of the total children in attendance were between the ages of twelve and thirteen, only 3.5 per cent between 13 and 14.¹

The Act of 1900 sanctioned the substitution of fourteen for thirteen as the age of compulsory attendance, and Manchester, in common with the other leading authorities, made use of it and altered its by-laws accordingly, so that the "Dunce's Pass" now could be only operative between thirteen and fourteen.²

However, an "intermittent agitation" against the new by-laws was carried on by a society calling itself "The Citizens' Defence Society," and claiming to represent the poor parent who was deprived of his child's earnings. It also represented the ratepayers who wanted to reduce the Education Rate, and at one time it gained publicity by insisting that the raising of the age—even with exemptions—was forcing many parents to seek Poor Relief. When this statement was challenged by the School Board it could not be substantiated, but the Board thought it wise to modify its by-laws, so that full-time exemption could be granted to a child between thirteen and fourteen years of age—apart from the "Dunce's Pass"—when it could be shown that the child was "necessarily and beneficially employed." It also adopted a new

¹ School Board Report, 1897-1900.

² The 1900 Act made 350 and not 250 attendances necessary, and they had to be in the last five years.

income scale by which this condition was determined. In spite of this concession to popular agitation, children were staying longer at school. In 1904, 6 per cent of the children at school were between thirteen and fourteen instead of only 3·5 per cent in 1899.

After the war all exemptions below fourteen were abolished. The ambiguous term "necessarily and beneficially employed" disappeared from educational administration, but now, twenty years afterwards—1939—it is to reappear, in connection with the raising of the age to fifteen. It is true that this time "necessarily" is left out, and "beneficially" is supposed to relate entirely to the child, and to the suitability of the particular occupation. Conditions also can be attached to each certificate of employment, but it remains to be seen whether Manchester will answer in the negative the question whether any employment for a child below fifteen can be "beneficial" for that child.

The problem of school attendance was not confined to gradually raising the age for exemption, but included also the daily work of ensuring regular attendance at school. Attendance officers were appointed early, and although Miss Lydia Becker demanded that some women should be employed for this work, her plea was disregarded then and for many years afterwards.

Manchester did not lead the country in the matter of regular attendance. Several times during the period the Government inspector remarked on its low figure of average attendance. Then followed the appointment of more attendance officers and a re-arrangement of districts.

It is interesting to compare the numbers on the roll and in average attendance for 1871, 1900 and 1937:

	<i>Number on Books</i>	<i>Average Attendance</i>
1871	44,916	30,202 = 68 per cent
1900	102,086	86,514 = 84 "
1937	98,427	86,169 = 87·5 "

The largest number on the roll, 124,411, was reached in 1920, and we are now (owing to changes in the age composition of the population) on the downward curve and, in spite of further extensions of the leaving age to fourteen, have fewer children in the schools than there were thirty-seven years ago. There has, however, been a real improvement in average attendance.

3. School Fees.

The question of school fees was involved with that of compulsory attendance. Although the Education Act had not provided free education—and many years had to pass before Parliament was induced to do so—it had compromised by giving School Boards power to remit fees for necessitous children attending voluntary schools. This was the famous twenty-fifth section of the 1870 Act which went through the House of Commons with little discussion, but which proved such a sectarian bone of contention that it was repealed in 1876. The 1870 Act also gave power to School Boards to provide a free school in any district if the circumstances were such that in the opinion of the Education Department such a school was desirable.

The Manchester Education Aid Society, which, as we saw, had for several years paid fees for necessitous children, now dissolved, and the School Board drew up a poverty scale below which it remitted fees in its own schools and paid them for children attending voluntary schools.¹ In order to prevent the raising of school fees now that they could be paid out of the rates, a scale was fixed by the School Board: 2d. a week for infants, 3d. for girls in girls' schools and for boys in mixed schools, and 4d. for boys in boys' schools.²

Between March 1871 and November 1872, the School Board issued 48,512 orders to the amount of £3,958 for the payment of fees. As the orders had to be renewed every six months, this number represented over 16,000 children. The Poor Law Guardians, in addition to maintaining their own schools for children whose parents were on out-relief, had had power since 1855, owing to Canon Richson's agitation, to pay fees instead for these children to attend any school that the parents chose.³ This Act had been passed as one method of helping the voluntary schools, but the Manchester Board of Guardians had made very little use of it. When the 1870 Act came into operation, the Chorlton Guardians ceased

¹ After deducting rent a family of five was allowed 3s. per head per week. If the income were less than this, fees were paid by the Board. This is the first instance of an official means test, other than the Poor Law destitution test, and was later used in the grant of free meals to school children.

² Miss Becker protested strongly against the proposal that girls were only to get three pennyworth of education whilst boys got four pennyworth, but her protest was disregarded.

³ Denison's Act, 1855.

to pay fees under Denison's Act, as it was called, and the Manchester Board closed their out-relief school, eager to cast on the new Education Rate expenditure which they had formerly had to meet out of the Poor Rate. Half the orders for free schooling issued by the School Board in the first eighteen months were for children who should have been a charge on the Guardians.

In order to make this provision for payment of fees known to parents, twenty thousand forms of application were distributed to ministers and charitable organizations in the city. It was clearly stated on the form that the parents were free to choose any public elementary school, i.e. an inspected school, which would receive the children.

A considerable sum was spent by the Board in this way, in spite of protests from the secularists, who objected to ratepayers' money going to the support of denominational schools.¹ There was difficulty, too, with some of the schools. Class distinctions based upon ability to pay fees had always been present, and now that the parents who could not afford to pay fees could send their children to the school of their choice and have their fees paid, what would happen to the tone of the school? "Ragged and ill-mannered" children tended to drive away the "better-clad and better-behaved" children, and some managers and teachers objected to receiving children who were not only more trouble to teach because of previous neglect, but who kept away children who were able to pay higher fees than those recognized by the Board.

The School Board, faced by these difficulties, applied for permission to establish two free schools in poor parts of the town, but they were unsuccessful.

Meanwhile the agitation in Parliament against the payment of fees by School Boards to denominational schools was so strong that an Act was passed in 1873 making the Guardians responsible for seeing that children of parents on out-relief went to school, and for paying their fees as a part of out-relief. This made compulsory what by Denison's Act had been voluntary. It did not

¹ More use seems to have been made of the 25th section in Manchester and Salford—of both of which School Boards Mr. Birley was Chairman—than in other parts of the country. See *The Struggle for National Education*, by John Morley, p. 8.

satisfy the opponents, as the money still came out of the rates; neither did it meet the case of parents who were too poor to pay fees, but not poor enough to qualify for out-relief under the very stringent regulations of the Manchester Board of Guardians. Also, it seriously complicated the administrative problem. Instead of the fees being paid direct to the school by the School Board, they had to be extracted by the school from each parent out of the meagre sum given by the Guardians for out-relief. The schools suffered, and the School Board was faced with an increase of prosecutions. When the Act came into force the School Board had a conference with the Boards of Guardians in the city, and agreed to continue its previous practice under the twenty-fifth section.

However, in 1876 the original twenty-fifth section of the 1870 Act was repealed.¹ In future parents who could not pay fees, even if they were not eligible for relief, had to apply to the Guardians, who might pay the fee—not exceeding 3d. a week—or any part of it, and this was not to count as relief to the parents.

We can sympathize with the Government in its attempt to find a solution of an impossible position—impossible once compulsion was introduced—but the principle to which the anti-denominationalists objected, namely, rate aid to voluntary schools, still remained.

The result of this legislation was not happy. In the first place, Boards of Guardians—and there were three different ones in the area covered by the Manchester School Board—had different standards of inability to pay fees, and these were all lower than the poverty scale of the School Board. The Chorlton Board refused to settle a scale, and treated each case on its merits. The parent had always to apply in person, and waste time from work in waiting to see the committee of the Guardians. As many parents refused to apply to the Guardians, attendance fell and the schools lost Government grant. The position was so unsatisfactory that the entire separation of education from the Poor Law was urged upon Parliament by Manchester and other School Boards, but without avail.

The situation became easier as the number of Board schools, where the School Board could remit fees on its own scale, increased, and some of the voluntary schools came to the rescue by

¹ In the 1876 Education Act.

admitting a certain number of "free" scholars on the Board's scale without forcing the parents to appeal to the Guardians.¹

The case for free education was gaining ground, and it was a Conservative Government in 1891² that solved the problem. An extra Government fee grant was given both to Board and to voluntary schools, which made it possible for pupils to be admitted free without any inquiry into means.

This Act for the first time laid down the principle that "every father and mother in England has a right to free education without payment or charge of any kind for his or her children between the age of three and fifteen." "The right to free education is not a concession to poverty, but is common to all classes alike—any parent who has not got free education already may write to the Board of Education and claim it, either alone or in combination with other parents."

The Government grant of 10s. per child did not make it possible to abolish all fees, but only those below 3d. a week. This affected about two-thirds of the school places, and in the remaining third the difference between the fee and the 3d. met by the grant was paid by the parent. In 1894, of the children attending the Manchester Board Schools, 67 per cent were attending free, 23 per cent paid 1d. a week, and 5.9 per cent paid 6d., which was the fee charged in the higher grade schools. In the organized science schools, of which there were four, the fee was 7d., including books. There had been much controversy as to whether School Boards should provide education other than elementary, and the House of Commons was not prepared to make it free.

After the 1902 Act fees were abolished in all elementary schools, provided and non-provided, as they were then called, except for higher grade schools.³ Fees in these schools were abolished under the Fisher Act on April 1, 1919.

It had taken twenty years for the country to realize that free education was the natural corollary of compulsory education. In 1907 free places in grant-aided secondary schools opened another door a crack. In 1919 Manchester, one of the first municipal authori-

¹ Most of the voluntary schools by their trust deeds had always provided for some non-fee paying children, and the Managers often remitted part of the fee in other deserving cases.

² The Elementary Education Act, 1891.

³ Ardwick, Central, Cheetham and Ducie Avenue.

ties to take the step, abolished fees in its maintained secondary schools. In 1931 this policy was reversed by order of the Board of Education, and 100 per cent special places¹ were substituted. This meant a return in secondary schools to the position which existed in elementary schools before 1891, when parents who could not afford to pay fees could get remission of the whole or of part on a means test.

4. Extension of the Conception of Elementary Education.

In England the education of the people, instead of being a State service for all children as in Prussia, Switzerland, and to some extent in Scotland, started, as we saw, as a charitable undertaking by the Churches for the children of the workers. They were left alone to do the work of civilization—work which should have been the concern of the Government—and for the first third of the nineteenth century, when Manchester was undergoing its transformation into the centre of a vast manufacturing district, the Churches struggled unaided with a mass of immigrant children.

When, in 1833, the Government realized that an ignorant and untrained population was a source of danger, instead of taking over the whole responsibility it gave a meagre grant of £20,000. The Churches were then so firmly entrenched in the eyes of the public as the right instruments of education that the grant only got through Parliament on the understanding that it was to be distributed by the two religious bodies.

This decision not only ensured the close connection between the Churches and the schools, which has remained to this day, but it settled the lines upon which State education was to develop. The children of the rich and the rapidly increasing middle classes, did not attend the day schools of either of the two religious bodies. Those schools were for the children of the poor, for which no other provision was made. Parents who could afford to pay high fees sent their children to private adventure schools. Some of their boys went to the Grammar School which, although free and theoretically open to anyone, managed, by providing a purely classical education, to protect itself from the entrance of working-class children.

¹ This means that although all the places are filled by competitive examinations as before, a standard fee is fixed, and parents are excused payment of the whole or part according to the amount of their income.

But the distinction between education for the rich man's son and education for the child of the worker went farther than the actual school in which it was given. Since education was considered by the State primarily as an insurance against unrest, and not as something to which every child, rich or poor, had a right, it followed that the poor child only needed the minimum of education; religion, of course, to teach him his place in a divinely ordered world, writing and arithmetic so that he could be a useful worker, and reading, so that he could read not only the Bible but also the works of Adam Smith, and learn to understand "the laws of Political Economy." If this was the popular view, there were men—and outstanding amongst them was Kay-Shuttleworth—who realized the richness that education could bring even to one who was destined all his life to be a poor man, but even they conceived education as something different for the worker than for the well-to-do. With this attitude towards education on the part of the governing classes, the three R's naturally formed the main subjects of instruction. The teachers, too, were only gradually becoming a trained body, and had often only monitors of twelve years of age to help them with their huge classes. But as conditions improved other subjects crept in: English literature, singing, some attempt at physical training, history, geography. This movement received a severe setback when the Revised Code was adopted, and grants given only on proficiency in the three R's. Not only did this change save money to the Government, which was one of its objects, but it put the education of the worker back on the lines from which, in the opinion of the governing classes, it should never have strayed.

However, after 1870, when the Board Schools with rate aid did not have to depend entirely upon Government grants, and when public opinion was ready for another advance, the natural tendency of education to burst artificial bonds again asserted itself.

In 1881, the new code of the Education Department had tried to improve the deplorable state of affairs brought about by "payment by results," by allotting a part of the Government grant on "merit," that is to say, on the general conduct of the school, its tone, method of teaching and all that goes to make up what Matthew Arnold had called its "intellectual life." The intention was good, but in the opinion of Mr. Scotson, one of the most distinguished of Manchester teachers, the results did not come up to expectation.

He found that the inspectors could not sufficiently detach themselves from the business of examining and marking each child on the three R's to look at the school as a whole, and that the merit grant really depended upon the percentage of passes that the individual children had acquired in the examination.

Even when "payment by results" was abolished (1897),¹ it took some time before teachers and inspectors broke free from its shackles. Although the list of subjects taught in the schools was almost as varied as any list to-day of those taught in Senior Selective Central and Technical Schools, and although the organized science schools were really Junior High Schools in scope, the fact that the subjects were divided into "class" subjects and "special" subjects, carrying different ratios of grant—elementary science was a "class subject," as was geography, whilst hygiene, shorthand and French were "special"—prevented the curriculum from being devised or followed as a whole. It was not until grants were made independent of subjects, and all the different grants consolidated into a block grant, that real progress with a synthesized curriculum could be achieved or even attempted. The present educational tendency to abolish "subjects" could never have been evolved under the old system of grants, which measured out teaching like groceries, and made up a bill to be presented for payment—if signed by the inspector.

From very early days the School Board found it impossible to confine its activities to the three R's. Children whose parents wished them to remain at school after twelve years of age or who, being unusually bright, had passed the Fourth Standard, which gave them exemption too early to be able to go to work, needed more advanced teaching. As there were not enough of these children in each school to satisfy the Government's requirement for a class, they were drafted to Central Schools, which later became higher grade schools, where higher fees were charged. Classes in science and art, originally intended for pupil teachers, were thrown open to others, and this led to the institution of organized science schools. In this way, Manchester, like London, laid herself open to the charge of spending money from the rates on education that was not elementary.

¹ In 1900 the Government grant was again altered, and calculated on average attendance.

The elementary schools also began a connection with the two secondary schools, the old-established Manchester Grammar School and the newly-established Girls' High School.¹ The Grammar School, which had been financially reconstructed, and made mainly into a fee-paying school, offered twenty entrance scholarships each year, ten of which, if possible, were to be given to candidates from elementary schools. To the surprise of the Grammar School and the pleasure of the School Board, fifteen of the twenty successful scholars in the first year came from elementary schools, seventeen out of twenty-one in the second year, and twenty out of the twenty-three in the third year. "This is a very remarkable proof," says the Government inspector, "of the excellence of the best elementary schools, that they have actually beaten the middle-class schools at an examination where some of the subjects were a little out of their usual course of instruction."²

Parliament decided that technical education should be under the control of Councils, not of School Boards, and the Technical Instruction Committee of the Manchester City Council was formed in 1890, Manchester being the second municipality to adopt the Act, under which a rate could be raised for the purpose. The "Whisky Money,"³ which brought Manchester £11,500 in 1892, was also spent on higher education.

The Committee had taken over the Technical School and the School of Art from the Whitworth Trustees (1892) and, after a visit to the technical institutions of the Continent, principally of Germany and Switzerland, realized how far England was behind in this branch of education. "When we think of Manchester as the capital of Lancashire," they reported, "comparison becomes almost ludicrous and the efforts yet made by us appear utterly insignificant."

The new College of Technology was opened (1902), and its students were allowed to enter for the ordinary B.Sc. examination of the Victoria University. The Committee gave up the preparatory department of the Technical School, and instead offered two hundred scholarships for children from the higher grade and Secondary Schools to the College. The education ladder was, said Alderman Hoy,⁴ complete in Manchester. Children from the elementary school, especially the higher grade schools, could go

¹ In 1878.

² See above, p. 138.

³ Report of Government inspector, Mr. Oakley, 1879.

⁴ Chairman of the Technical Instruction Committee.

through either the Grammar School or the Technical School up to Owens College.

In 1905 the Faculty of Technology was instituted at the University, and full-time day students at the College were able to take the degree of B.Sc.Tech. Manchester is the only education authority which houses, administers and finances a University faculty.

III

1902-1918

By the beginning of the twentieth century voluntary schools in Manchester, as in other parts of the country, were having a hard struggle. The cost of education was continually rising, the number of children growing, and these factors not only increased the School Board rate but necessitated larger subscriptions from the supporters of voluntary schools, who thus had to pay twice over.

The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church held strongly the view that education that was not based on the religious doctrines of their Churches was not true education. The Non-conformists, who were equally convinced of the necessity for a religious basis for education, were satisfied with the "undenominational teaching," as it was called, of the Board Schools, but which was much more in accord with their religious beliefs than with those of the Church of England or of the Roman Catholic Church. The people who wanted all religious teaching to be relegated to the Sunday schools and kept out of the day schools were but a small section of the population.

Once again England had the choice of abandoning or saving the dual system, and once more, this time under a Conservative Government, she saved it. Once more the hounds of sectarian strife were let loose, and Nonconformists, who were mostly Liberals, joined with the parliamentary opposition in fighting the Education Bill of 1902 which was crudely described as "Putting Rome on the Rates;" but in spite of strong opposition in the country, and in the House of Commons, the Bill became law. Voluntary schools, now

known as non-provided schools, are maintained by the rates and the taxes in the same way as are the provided or council schools. The only difference is that the former could not until 1936 receive grants towards capital expenditure. This handicap was, however, modified to some extent by the duty laid upon the Education Committee to pay for fair "wear and tear" of the non-provided school premises.¹

The 1902 Act abolished the School Board and handed education over to a committee of the City Council, thus reverting to the plan that had been put forward by both parties in Manchester in the late 'fifties, and rectified what some democrats had felt to be a weakness of the 1870 Act, namely, the divorce between the authority that spent and the authority that raised the rates.

One-third of the managers of the non-provided schools are appointed by the local authority. The managers appoint the teachers in their schools subject to a veto by the Education Committee on educational grounds alone, which means, in effect, that managers of Church of England schools appoint members of the Church of England, Roman Catholic managers appoint members of their Church, and the Education Committee does not concern itself with the religion of the teachers it appoints to its provided schools.

During the thirty-six years since the passing of the Act, and in spite of occasional friction between the committee and the managers of a school, the relations in Manchester have been happy. Managers of non-provided schools often go to the Chief Inspector for help and advice in the appointment of their staffs, the non-provided schools share equally in sports, camps, and all school activities, and there is no feeling on the Committee of antagonism to non-provided schools. At long last the children in the schools, and not the way in which these schools are controlled, are the paramount consideration with members of the Committee, with teachers, and with officials. Whereas between 1870 and 1902 the School Board thrived on sectarian quarrels, now the last thing any member of the Committee wants is a dispute involving religious issues.

A serious defect in the Act, pointed out in Manchester by Mrs.

¹ This clause was inserted at the instance of the Bishop of Manchester, Bishop Fraser.

Pankhurst, who a few years later started the Suffragette agitation, was that as women were not eligible¹ for membership of municipal councils, they would not be able to serve on the new education authorities. It was to meet this defect that the condition that at least two of the co-opted members must be women was introduced as the Bill went through Parliament. Manchester had four women² on its first committee of fifty-one. When the total was reduced to thirty-three it had three, but it was not until 1908 that it had its first woman councillor, when Miss Margaret Ashton, who had been co-opted two years before on the Education Committee, was elected to the City Council for the Withington Ward.

A committee of fifty-one—the School Board had consisted of only fifteen members—was found to be unmanageable, especially as, in 1904, Withington and Moss Side were brought into the city and direct representation on the Education Committee promised to them. In 1906, therefore, the committee was reduced to thirty-three, of whom twenty were members of the City Council and thirteen were co-opted from outside.

Instead of a School Board consisting of supposed “educational experts,” there was substituted a committee of which two-thirds were members of the Council, not expected to have any special knowledge of the subject, and thirteen co-opted members “who were to be persons of experience in the management or administration of education.” Tradition has ensured usually that the Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University and the Dean of Manchester are co-opted, and that an elementary teacher is included;³ and in addition to representatives of the Church of England and of the Roman Catholic Church, a prominent Non-conformist has generally been amongst the co-opted members. The committee in both its elected and co-opted sections tries to represent the proportion of the three political parties in the Council, but the necessity for doing this is not always consistent with selecting as co-opted members persons of “experience in education.”

¹ They were made eligible in 1907.

² Miss Sara Burstall, Miss Dendy, Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Eva Gore-Booth.

³ The first of these was Mr. Wardale, then Mr. Lakin, Miss McCulloch, and Mr. Tom Brown, who still holds the position.

The 1902 Act settled the administrative controversy about the provision of higher forms of education from the rates. The new local authority was able to deal with elementary, secondary and technical education, thus providing the local counterpart to the Government department, the Board of Education, which had been set up in 1899, with all branches of education under its control. The higher grade schools remained elementary, and developed later into District General and then into Selective Central Schools, whilst the largest and best of the organized science schools, that in Whitworth Street,¹ was made into a secondary school (1904). Twenty-five per cent of free places were reserved for children from elementary schools who had passed Standard VI, but so many were found to be qualified that a competitive examination had to be introduced. Two new secondary schools for girls were provided. Other important developments of the period between 1902 and the outbreak of war were the grant of scholarships to the universities and to the College of Technology, the institution of the Faculty of Technology at the Victoria University,² the appointment of the first woman inspector,³ the transference of the Domestic Economy School to the Education Committee, the opening of special day schools for mentally defective children at Harpurhey and Embden Street,⁴ the residential school for crippled children at Swinton House and Parkfield,⁵ which was the first of its kind in the country, the School Medical Service, first under a half-time⁶ and then under a whole-time⁷ doctor.

Free meals for children had, as we saw,⁸ been provided during hard winters since 1886. When the Provisions of Meals Act (1906) was passed, meals could be provided from the rates, and the Act was immediately put in force in Manchester. The amount of money that could be spent was limited to 1d. rate, and free breakfasts and dinners were provided at a cost, in 1908, of £11,000.

The problem of certificated teachers became more acute after 1902. There was a quickening of educational effort all over the country, and a raising of standards which intensified the competition for trained teachers. Manchester now wanted them, but could not always get them. In 1907 certificated teachers were only

¹ Mr. Scotson was the first headmaster.

² In 1904.

³ In 1902.

⁴ In 1904.

⁵ In 1903.

⁶ See above, p. 256.

⁷ In 1905.

⁸ See above, p. 242.

66 per cent of the whole staff. An attempt by the Committee to buy the Platt Hall estate for a training college was unsuccessful. It was bought instead for a public park, and the attempt to acquire an alternative site for a training college was not pursued. Instead the Council decided to economise by establishing a Day Training College in the old buildings in Princess Street, where there was already a Pupil Teachers' Centre. Although the Board of Education only gave provisional sanction to the premises in 1911, they remained in use as a training college until 1928.

For the first time, in 1910,¹ the question of the employment of married women was raised, and a resolution was carried that, in future, no married women other than widows be engaged by the Committee as teachers. Although this decision was challenged in the Council, it was confirmed.² Married women already in the service were not turned out, but teachers were expected to resign on marriage. During the war teachers who had married men serving with the Forces were graciously allowed to remain until after the war, thereby helping the Committee out of the difficulty caused by a shortage of teachers. After the war they had to go, but in 1922 they could be retained on two grounds, both of which had to be present, namely exceptional financial hardship and good teaching ability. Gradually, however, only the former was considered, and the Committee for all intents and purposes became similar to a committee dealing with public assistance. The income of the future husband, his dependants if any, as well as those of the teacher, and the resources of other members of both households, were examined by the Education Committee, and if the result was what it considered ample the teacher, however excellent at her work, was told that she must choose between marriage and her job. A first class infant teacher, at a time when such teachers were scarce, was not allowed to continue in her post, although the Committee, realizing that her circumstances would be difficult, was ready to offer her evening work. Another teacher, who had to support an old father and who had been engaged for years to a man earning between £3 and £4 a week, who also had to support his mother, was not given permission to remain, the Committee evidently feeling that an income which had been just sufficient to support two people could easily be stretched so as to support four. A collection of

¹ January 24, 1910.

² Committee Minutes, July 26, 1915.

"hard cases" enabled the question to be raised again in 1928. Although a resolution in favour of allowing women to remain after marriage was defeated in the Education Committee, it was carried in the Council. Since that time women have been allowed to make their own decision as to whether marriage and their work are, or are not, incompatible. Although the opponents again raised the question in 1934, they were this time defeated both in Committee and in the Council.

In 1911 Mr. Reynolds, who had combined the posts of Director of Higher Education and Principal of the College of Technology, retired, and Mr. Wyatt, who had been in the employment of the Committee since the beginning of the School Board and had become Director of Elementary Education, was made Director of Education. A principal was appointed for the College of Technology under the Director, and for the first time all departments were brought under one official.

So far as administration was concerned, the machinery was now satisfactory, both centrally and locally, but the same could not be said of the financial arrangements. In Manchester as elsewhere, the sharing of the cost between rates and taxes had been altering to the disadvantage of the ratepayer. In 1905 54 per cent of the cost of education in Manchester had been met by Government grant; in 1913 no more than 45 per cent. This tendency to put more cost on the rates was having a serious effect upon educational development, and although the Government gave special grants for medical treatment and for special schools, the amount was limited and did not bear any relation to the expenditure. Amongst other recommendations of the Kemp Committee on Local Taxation was that of a percentage grant for education, and after the war this was embodied in the Fisher Act which overhauled the existing grant system and established the guarantee of a minimum grant of 50 per cent to those authorities—Manchester and London were the largest—where the operation of the other factors of the grant formula would not ensure this percentage. This guarantee was abolished in the economy crisis of 1931, and has not yet been reinstated, with the result that to-day the rates have to bear more than half of the total expenditure.

1918-1938

The last thirty years are the years in which, the foundations having been well and truly laid, much greater advance has been possible than at any other period throughout the century. This has been due not only to an improvement in administrative technique and Government aid, but also to the inevitable fact that the more education is given the greater the demand for it from those who have come under its influence.

The comradeship of the trenches may not have meant much when the individuals returned to civil life, and officers and men who had shared the discomforts, dangers and horrors of those war years found themselves back in their old positions of employers and employed. But public opinion kept something of that feeling of equality, and the fact that the Education Act of 1918 was the first piece of reconstruction carried through after the war showed both that in the struggle for a nation's existence the value of education had at last been appreciated, and that the idea that the education of the worker's child should be less in quantity and worse in quality than that of the well-to-do had had a bad jolt.

It was fortunate that the possibilities for this advance coincided in Manchester with the appointment of Spurley Hey as director. He was a man of great administrative ability, with a dominant personality, both physical and mental. He had both the imagination to plan, and the necessary drive to carry out, new policies, and above all he had a passionate belief in what education, widely interpreted, could and should do for the mass of the children of the country. For sixteen years he inspired as well as directed the service.¹

The Education Committee willingly allowed themselves to be dominated by his enthusiasm, his greater knowledge and his sound judgment. This attitude used to call forth amused comments from members of other education committees, who taunted Manchester members with "being run by their Director." Whatever may be the theory of the relation of a municipal official to his committee, there was no doubt that Spurley Hey was an autocrat who made

¹ He died in April 1930.

no attempt to disguise the fact.¹ In a different sphere he was the true successor of Sir Joseph Heron.

He soon became a figure of national importance in the educational world, served on Departmental Committees, helped to run the Association of Education Committees, was the moving spirit of the triumvirate, the other two being the Directors of Leeds and Sheffield,² sometimes called "The Three Musketeers," which was alternately consulted by, and in violent collision with, the Board of Education.

Although, as he said, "no generation can settle the educational problems of its successors," the lines which he laid down for the development of education in Manchester have been followed up to the present, with few alterations.

The Education Act of 1918 made possible for the first time a comprehensive scheme of education from two years until eighteen, "a national scheme—available for all persons capable of profiting thereby." Under the 1902 Act it was only the provision of elementary education that was compulsory, although the local authority was given power to supply or to aid the supply of secondary education. The 1918 Act made it a statutory duty of the authority to provide higher education, including advanced work in Central Schools and classes, for children between twelve and fifteen in elementary schools, and it also gave power to provide for the under-fives by means of Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes. Half-time attendance and all exemptions below the end of the term in which the child became fourteen were abolished, as were also fees in all elementary schools, provided and non-provided, including higher grade schools. An important section (44) made it the duty of the Education Authority to "secure that children and young persons shall not be debarred from receiving the benefits of any form of education by which they are capable of profiting through inability to pay fees." Manchester attempted to carry out this duty in 1920 by abolishing fees in the Municipal Secondary Schools, and by instituting a system of maintenance allowances for children in Secondary and Selective Central Schools.

¹ On one occasion, when the Committee had filled an important administrative post, the successful and somewhat elated candidate said to Mr. Hey that he hoped he was satisfied. "Do you think that you would have been appointed otherwise?" was the reply.

² The late Mr. James Graham and Sir Percival Sharp, now secretary of the Association of Education Committees,

"Education is the eternal debt that maturity owes to youth," said Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, and Mr. Hey was also conscious of the debt that the country owed to the children of the "men who fought and the women who worked in defence of their country." He made the Committee realize, too, the urgency of the present. The children only pass through the schools once—they have no second chance—so that the postponement of a problem, either that of the shortage of secondary school places, or of suitable provision for the under-fives until the ideal solution is possible, always seemed to him a betrayal of the children now passing, all too rapidly, through the schools. He drew upon himself violent attacks from the advocates of "Secondary Education for All" and of separate nursery schools, because of this attitude, but he never swerved from it, and the results in Manchester have justified him.

Whilst always taking the long view, he never forgot the present. When in 1924 the Labour Government was thinking of raising the age to fifteen, and made inquiries from local authorities as to the time necessary to provide the accommodation, Spurley Hey replied that if the age were raised immediately Manchester could manage somehow. It might mean the temporary use of buildings not pre-eminently suitable for schools, it might mean an augmentation of the teaching staff by teachers not so well qualified as he would have liked, but that the children, then aged fourteen and about to pass for ever from any educational influence, would benefit he had no doubts at all.

In 1918 he laid before the Education Committee a report of the position in Manchester and his proposals for the future. He found the condition of the schools above the average of the country, but there was still much to be done. "A continuous and almost unlimited supply of bricks and mortar for the next forty years" he felt would be necessary. Arrears from the war years added to the arrears that had been increasing ever since 1870. Never had the Education Authority been able to keep pace with the demand for school places, and all through the years "temporary buildings" had been erected to solve the immediate problem.

Many schools were overcrowded; the artificial lighting was bad; playgrounds too small; standard of ventilation and cleanliness too low, and furniture and equipment unsuitable and inadequate. He found that there was more residential school accommodation for mentally

and physically defective children than in most other authorities, but that it still fell very far short of the need, and that children were allowed to leave these schools at fourteen instead of at sixteen.

The School Medical Services, which had been depleted during the war, must be increased, and "three times as many clinics are necessary," he said, if treatment was to be brought within reasonable reach of all who needed it.

The evening schools he found excellent. Manchester had done pioneer work in this field in the past, and he thought that the system was being worked to the best advantage, but he found that a fair proportion of the students were over eighteen years of age, so that it was obvious that evening schools were "entirely inadequate as an educational provision for adolescents."

The problem of the adolescent was one that seemed to him of great urgency. He made two inquiries into juvenile crime, and found an intimate connection between it and social conditions, housing, opportunities for recreation, and lack of open spaces. On his advice evening play centres were opened in the crowded parts of the city, and he looked forward with great hope to the compulsory day continuation classes outlined in the 1918 Act. It was a bitter disappointment when the "appointed day" never arrived, but he salvaged from the wreck all he could. About a hundred employers voluntarily sent their boys and girls to the schools for which teachers had been specially trained, and three works schools were staffed and financed by the Education Committee. About 2,000 children between fourteen and eighteen years of age were thus catered for, but there were altogether over 36,000 between these ages.

"All real progress in education will depend ultimately upon the efficiency and adequacy of the teaching staff," and he found that the qualifications of the teachers on the staffs of the elementary schools were as follows. We include for comparison the position to-day.

			1918		1937	
Total Elementary staff	..	..	3,326		3,105	
Graduates	..	..	4 per cent		7.7 per cent	
Trained and Certificated (these include the graduates)	..	..	48	„	85	„
Certificated but not trained	..	..	35	„	10	„
Uncertificated	..	..	16	„	4	„
Supplementary	..	..	1	„	0.33	„

Already in 1916 the Committee had ceased to appoint any more uncertificated and supplementary teachers. He set to work to get a staff "carefully selected, fully qualified, and adequately trained."

"It is at the beginning and the end of the elementary school period that the new Education Act appears likely to have the greatest amount of influence upon elementary schools in the near future," he wrote, and it is with Nursery Classes, of which Manchester was the pioneer, and with Selective Central Schools, where she followed the example of the L.C.C., that Spurley Hey's name will always be associated.

Although the infant schools in Manchester had, as we saw, always been open to children under five—one of the good legacies of the industrialization of the district, with its demands for married women's labour—the babies' rooms were not usually up to the standard that educational opinion was beginning to demand for children of three and four years old. In 1911¹ Margaret McMillan opened her Nursery School at Deptford, and in 1917 the Manchester headmistress of an infant school in the heart of Hulme² asked permission to experiment with a Nursery Class. The surrounding area, one of the most crowded districts of Manchester, was completely built up. There was no possibility of a separate Nursery School in a new building; she did not want to make a break for the children at five, but there was a room in the school which could be adapted and set apart for a small number of the children who crowded into the ordinary babies' class. Twenty-five children, under a specially trained teacher, in a room where it was possible to provide special washing arrangements, small chairs and tables, space for free play, and for sleep in separate beds in the afternoon formed the first Nursery Class, and remained the pattern upon which later ones were based.

There were then forty thousand children between the ages of two and five in Manchester, and the Director calculated that provision should ultimately be made for half of this number in the schools. Eight thousand were then in the babies' classes of the ordinary infant schools, and he turned his attention first to these. He pointed out that with all the demands from the other parts of the service, it would be impossible to provide for these children in

¹ *Margaret McMillan*, by Albert Mansbridge, p. 95.

² Miss Tripp, headmistress of the Mulberry Street Infants' School, Hulme.

separate Nursery Schools of fifty, even if sufficient sites had been available near their homes which, in the parts of the city where they were most needed they certainly were not. He also felt that it would be a cardinal mistake to cut these children off from all connection with the elementary school, to which they would have to go at five years of age, and he most emphatically did not share the Nursery School enthusiasts' distrust of the head teacher of the infants' school. On the contrary he held, and proved, that the successful head teacher of an infants' school, who had kept up with modern methods of teaching, had qualities which young women fresh from a training college, however well equipped with the latest Montessori theory, could not be expected to possess, but which were essential to the successful handling of these children.

He proposed that the Committee should aid the two voluntary Nursery Schools, build a few new ones of its own to serve as models and as standards for the work, but that as a general policy and for the mass of the children it should provide Nursery Classes in infant schools, where the conditions were suitable. These conditions have been rigidly adhered to in the sixty Nursery Classes now existing, and in all new buildings special provision for Nursery Classes has always been included.¹ The standard of staffing, too, has been rigidly maintained. Where there are more than twenty-five children (there are never more than forty) the teacher has the help of two student nurses who are going later to train either for hospital or for private nursing.

Manchester's policy in this respect was violently attacked by the "whole hogger" supporters of Nursery Schools, but until a few years ago there were more children in the Manchester Nursery Classes² than in all the Nursery Schools in England and Wales. If Manchester had waited until she could provide a separate home for every group of from twenty-five to fifty children she would not have made much progress with the problem even after twenty years.

One model Nursery School has been built by the Education Committee in Palmerston Street, Ancoats, which provides for one hundred children.

¹ This involved a controversy with the Board when Lord Eustace Percy, the then President, held that such provision was not necessary in a well-to-do suburb (Chorlton-cum-Hardy). Eventually, however, the provision was allowed.

² The sixty classes accommodate 1,600 children.

The controversy, once so bitter, is now practically dead. Although there are enthusiasts who still maintain the extreme position, probably the lines taken by the Report on Infant Schools and Infant Classes by the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education,¹ meets with general agreement. This recommended that where housing and social conditions are bad, Nursery Schools should be provided and designed primarily for those children who needed careful attention to their physical welfare, longer hours at schools, and meals, but that for the normal child Nursery Classes in infant schools should eventually prove the type of provision. These recommendations, fifteen years after the opening of the controversy in which Spurley Hey was the protagonist of Nursery Classes, follow closely upon his recommendations in 1918.

The position with regard to secondary education in Manchester in 1918, even if no worse than in the country as a whole, was not satisfactory. There were four municipal secondary schools with accommodation for 2,800 pupils,² and four schools under independent governors, which were then applying to the Education Committee for grants, under the increased powers given by the new Act.³ The total provision from both these sources was 4,500 places, of which about 25 per cent were taken by children outside the area. As there were at this date 65,000 children between the ages of eleven and sixteen in Manchester, this provided little more than the "fringe of secondary education."

However, the first post-war economy campaign put off the provision of extra schools, and, following London's example, the Selective Central school was developed. The existing District Central Schools were reorganized as "selective" schools to which children gained admission at the same age and on the same entrance examination as to the secondary schools.

Again, as with Nursery Classes, Spurley Hey laid himself open to the charge of adopting the second best. Again, he answered on the basis of the immediate problem: "There is the problem—no less than the sheer, accumulated, educational waste of some of the best brain power in our schools, the deprivation from many children

¹ Published 1933.

² The Central High School for Boys, the Central High School for Girls, Whalley Range High School for Girls, Harpurhey High School for Girls.

³ The Manchester Grammar School, the Hulme Grammar School, the Manchester High School for Girls, and the Withington High School for Girls.

of a better opportunity of training for citizenship, and the condemnation of many to circumstances from which better education alone could lift them. . . . What is the remedy? It is an alternative to the single choice of ordinary elementary school or secondary school; the Central School provides an excellent alternative. Educational administration cannot for the next twenty-five years content itself with merely those whose only policy is to wait for either a raising of the elementary school age to sixteen, or a quadrupling of secondary school provision, or some combination of both policies. It is a feeble proceeding to inform those children who are being denied a more advanced education to-day that what this generation denies them they will find satisfaction in providing for their successors. The wastage is here and now, and demands an immediate remedy."¹

But again, as in the case of the Nursery Classes, he was not content merely with providing a second best. The Central Schools were not to be pale copies of the traditional secondary schools, but were to provide various types of post-primary education, some having a commercial and some having a technical, which included a domestic, bias.

Increased supply of secondary school places from 1,900 in 1918 to 4,043 in 1934, half in maintained and half in grant-aided schools, combined with the provision of reorganized senior schools has diminished the demand for Central Schools in Manchester, and instead of twenty² there are now eleven, with 4,200 pupils.

The battle between the school and the factory for possession of the child, which began in 1833, had ended with the Fisher Act in the victory of the school. Children were safe at least until fourteen. The next stage, as Spurley Hey pointed out, is being fought over the adolescent. "The battle will be shorter but the result will be the same,"³ he wrote in 1924 with splendid optimism.

Reorganization did not appear in Manchester so early as in some areas, neither did she "reorganize in a week-end," as was unkindly said of more rapidly moving authorities. This was due to two reasons: Spurley Hey's dislike of "mass transference" of

¹ *The Central School*, by Spurley Hey, p. 11.

² The fact that some of the vacated central schools have been used as senior schools shows that what Spurley Hey demanded with respect to equipment, building, etc., for five Selective Central Schools is now the standard that Manchester demands for senior schools.

³ *The Central School*, by Spurley Hey, p. 5.

children by age, without a uniform standard of attainment, with which he had experimented at Rotherham long before the Hadow Report was issued, and the distribution in Manchester of children between the denominational and Council schools which complicated the problem. But when, in 1928, the Board of Education, in its pamphlet called *The New Prospect in Education*, accepted the principle, Spurley Hey realized that reorganization must come. He then determined that if children were to be subject to "mass transference" the schools must be so well equipped and well staffed that they should get the best possible chance in their new environment. Manchester, he felt, must still lead, and so almost his last work was setting the standard for senior schools—a site of eight acres for six hundred children, a building with a hall, library, dining-room and gymnasium, with special rooms for art, science, handicrafts and domestic subjects, and a staff that included fifteen full-time specialists. The first senior school built for the purpose at Gorton included all these requirements, and was appropriately named, after his death, the Spurley Hey Senior School. There was considerable difficulty with the Board over the gymnasium, and the next economy period, 1931, happening just afterwards, no further senior schools were able to have gymnasia. Now, 1937, the Board, in its new-found enthusiasm for physical training, is urging the Committee to add gymnasia to all senior schools at, of course, a considerably greater cost than if they had been provided when the schools were built—so short-sighted are "economy stunts."

Up to date eight completely new senior schools have been built, and although the separate dining-hall has had to be sacrificed as well as the gymnasium, the other amenities of the Spurley Hey school have been provided. Twenty-four senior schools are in adapted premises. They all have an assembly hall, accommodation for science, arts and crafts, domestic subjects or manual training. A room for a library has been provided in eight schools, and a separate geography room in others.

When Manchester started to reorganize there were 65,000 children in Council schools, 25,600 in Church of England schools and 20,000 in Roman Catholic schools. The Church of England propose to provide senior schools in certain districts, but otherwise to transfer their children to the Council schools, in which religious instruction is given on a syllabus agreed between the Committee,

the teachers, and representatives of the Church of England and of the Nonconformists.¹

The Roman Catholics, who at first objected strongly to the break-up of the parish all-age school, have gradually come to accept the principle. The decision of the Education Committee to make grants up to 75 per cent towards the cost of new senior schools under conditions specified by the Act of 1936 has eased the position, and Roman Catholic senior children will, in time, be grouped in Roman Catholic senior schools. Since 1929 nineteen of the thirty-two districts into which the city was divided for this purpose, have been reorganized, which means that 68 per cent of the children attending Council schools, or 38 per cent of all school children, are now in reorganized schools.

During the last of the three periods, 1918-1938, education has suffered heavily from the curse that has haunted it ever since public money was first spent on it, namely, periodical fits of economy. At intervals, since the war, there have been first the Geddes Axe,² which chopped into the fine advance of 1918, and then the "crisis" of 1931, which came hot upon the heels of the expansion under the Labour Government of 1929. The effects of the last stoppage are still being felt locally, although the Board of Education itself is now encouraging advance—an advance which, under the present conditions of grant, means that the lion's share of the cost falls upon the ratepayer.

Education suffers more than the other social services from alternations of advance³ and halt, because it, unlike Public Health, is always subject to the inquisition, naturally more severe when times are bad, as to whether we are really getting "Value for Money." "Since Education is a movement in which the *outlay* is measured in terms of cash, the *results* in terms of humanity,"⁴ it is not an easy question to answer, and it is accompanied in the minds of those who ask it most insistently, namely the well-to-do taxpayer who sends his own children to expensive schools, by a fear that the children educated at the public expense may actually be

¹ This was settled in 1925 and is now undergoing revision.

² In 1922.

³ Procedure by programme was instituted by the Board of Education in 1924, under its first Labour President, Sir Charles Trevelyan, and Manchester was the first authority to submit a programme covering ten years' development. Later, the Board called for three-yearly programmes.

⁴ *Value for Money*, by Spurley Hey, p. 14.

getting a better education than his own, and therefore be better able to compete for the higher posts in industry and in the professions.

But although in the last third of the century education in Manchester has been hampered by financial considerations, the period has undoubtedly seen the greatest advance along all lines. Increase of secondary schools, the experiment of Selective Central Schools, Nursery Classes, reorganized senior schools with, when the age is raised, almost unlimited possibilities for humanistic education; development of the School Medical Services to include, amongst other things, a Child Guidance Clinic; a Remand Home and an Approved School under the Education Committee; new buildings of the single-storey, open-air type in larger playgrounds than ever before; swimming and games, for which many teachers give up their spare time, including Saturdays; the long-needed extension of the College of Technology; Junior Technical Schools in close connection with industry on the one hand, and with the College of Technology on the other; maintenance allowances for children in Central and secondary schools, in training colleges and at the universities; and, above all, a well-qualified staff—all this marks the progress of the last twenty-four years.

The most urgent need preparatory to the next advance is a change of financial policy, locally and nationally. Manchester suffered severely from the Board's economies in 1931, when the guarantee given by the Fisher Act that 50 per cent of expenditure should be met from Government grants was abolished. The percentage grant of 1919 had made a considerable difference to the Manchester ratepayer. In 1917-18, before it was instituted, Government grants were only 46 per cent of the total expenditure. In 1930 they were 50.5 per cent. In 1934, after the abolition of the 50 per cent guarantee, they had fallen to 46.7 per cent. In 1937 there was a slight recovery to 47.4 per cent. Until the Government readjusts this burden, progress will inevitably be hampered. The situation plays into the hands of the local economists who are so concerned to keep down the rates that they have severely restricted the necessary expansion of a service that can never be stationary.

"Education," said Spurley Hey, "will always be necessary, it will always be costly and there will always be critics."¹

¹ *Value for Money*, by Spurley Hey, p. 17.

THE ART GALLERY

The movement which began in Manchester in 1823 and which resulted in the building of the present Art Gallery was both enthusiastic and determined. In October of that year a public meeting was convened, from which sprang a society called "The Manchester Institution for the Promotion of Literature, Science and the Arts." The appeal for funds was so successful, £16,000 having been received, that the original plan of merely altering existing premises was abandoned in favour of the erection of a new building. A plot of land in Mosley Street was bought, after other sites, including the present Piccadilly site and the site of the Reference Library, had been considered. Royal patronage was obtained, and a gift of £500 was received from Sir Benjamin Heywood, the income from which was to form each year a reward for the most worthy production of science or art submitted to the Institution. The Royal Manchester Institution, which still exists, has as one of its activities the carrying out of the conditions attached to this gift.

The plans accepted for the Art Gallery were those designed by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Charles Barry, and in December 1824 the Committee set to work to get estimates and then to erect the building. Exhibitions were opened in the meantime in temporary premises, and in 1834 the new building was finished. The activities of the Institution consisted mainly of exhibitions and lectures. As one way of increasing the annual income, it was decided in 1853 to rent part of the premises to societies with kindred aims. The School of Design, now the Manchester School of Art, immediately took advantage of this facility, and was accommodated in the basement until its own premises at All Saints were provided in 1881.

In 1880 the difficulty of finance was hampering the Art Gallery's influence and usefulness, and it was felt that the time had arrived when the building and its contents should be transferred to the Manchester Corporation. The offer was accepted by the Council and the terms of transfer finally arranged. An annual grant of £2,000 was to be made by the Corporation for the purchase of works of art during the twenty years after the transfer and not, as

the Institution had first asked, in perpetuity. One-third of the Art Gallery Committee was to be selected by the Governors of the Royal Manchester Institution and two-thirds by the Corporation, its proceedings to be submitted to the Council for approval, as in the case of all other committees. These terms were embodied in the Manchester Corporation Act of 1882, and the Art Gallery was transferred to, and vested in, the Corporation of Manchester.¹

The Art Gallery Committee continued the annual and occasional exhibitions which had previously been held by the Royal Manchester Institution. In 1897, however, the permanent collection had encroached upon the space available for exhibitions to such an extent that the question of extending the building on its existing site was considered, and the plot of land between George Street and the present building was acquired. Before anything further was done, the question arose of the possibility of building a new Reference Library and an Art Gallery on the Infirmary site, as the Infirmary was anxious to move further out and, in 1903, the Corporation bought the Infirmary site for £400,000. So began the discussion of a question still, after forty years, undecided.

The years which followed were years of controversy regarding the use to which the Piccadilly site should be put. The Libraries Committee were anxious to proceed with the erection of a reference library as they had made arrangements to sell the building in King Street, while the restriction of accommodation was having an increasingly crippling effect upon the Art Gallery. In 1906 a report was submitted from a deputation, including the Lord Mayor and Councillor Butterworth, who visited Continental art galleries and museums. Of the towns visited, it was stated that only two, Berlin and Hamburg, were as large as Manchester in population. "Yet none has restricted its art collections to one school of painting and a little sculpture, as Manchester has done in its central municipal gallery. Towns of but half the population, such as Cologne, strive

¹ In 1902 the twenty years' agreement between the Corporation and the Governors of the Royal Institution, as provided for in the 1882 Act, came to an end and an arrangement was arrived at by which the seven members who were not elected by the Corporation were to be nominated as follows: Three by the Royal Manchester Institution, two by the Manchester Whitworth Institute, and two by Owens College. This was effected by a clause in the Act of 1902 together with a provision giving the Corporation discretion to provide out of the rates a yearly sum of £2,000 for the purchase of pictures or other works of art.

to include all periods of painting and sculpture and collections of every kind of art work."

At a public meeting of the citizens convened by the Lord Mayor and held in the Town Hall on May 7, 1907, a resolution was carried that the City Council should consider some scheme whereby the present Infirmary building could be adapted for the purpose of an Art Gallery, a Reference Library and Municipal Offices. However, the City Architect reported that the building was not suitable for adaptation to these purposes, and this was confirmed by an outside architect. In December 1907, therefore, in spite of considerable opposition, the Council instructed the Special Committee on the Infirmary site to prepare a scheme for a new building to serve as an Art Gallery and Reference Library combined.

This proposal was side-tracked for a time by suggestions that the Infirmary site should be used for a new Exchange, a Tram Station, or, alternatively, left as an open space. The fact that this last proposal, which is the one that, though never formally adopted, has been in effect accepted by the Council, emanated from one of the spasmodic ratepayers' associations, suggests that it was prompted by a desire to save the cost of a building rather than by enthusiasm for open spaces. However, in 1910, the report of the Special Committee submitting the general outline of a scheme for the erection of a Library and Art Gallery was presented, and after several amendments had been moved, the report was approved and a competition for a design for the combined buildings was held. In the meantime, permission was given to the Libraries Committee to erect a temporary structure on the site to house the Reference Library.¹

There was still so much uncertainty as to the fate of the site that at the end of 1912 it was levelled, sown with grass seed, provided with cross paths, and made into an open space. A year later it was decided to defer consideration of the whole matter of the utilization of the site until the Tramways Committee had presented their report on Traffic Congestion. The war years then intervened and the question was postponed. At the end of the war the Art Gallery Committee and the Libraries Committee came to the decision that their requirements could not be met by the erection of a combined building, and the Libraries Committee relinquished their

¹ See below, p. 281.

claim to the Piccadilly site. In October 1918 the Special Committee on the Infirmary Site were instructed to obtain competitive plans for the erection of an Art Gallery. An open competition was held, and the first prize was awarded to Mr. E. Berry Webber, A.R.I.B.A., of London. But, partly for reasons of economy, partly because opinion was still divided on the matter, the scheme was not proceeded with, and in 1931 the Council decided, in view of the urgent call for economy, to postpone it for five years. At the end of that period, in February 1936, again on the plea of economy, the scheme was postponed for a further period of five years. Meanwhile, the railings have been removed and the gardens beautifully planted, and the ordinary man, who cannot visualize a non-existent building, feels that the site would be ruined if half or three-quarters of an acre were used for an Art Gallery. No serious attempt has been made to find a more suitable site, and it looks as if Manchester will reach her bi-centenary before she possesses an Art Gallery worthy of a great city.

"What in the world do you want with art in Manchester? Why can't you stick to your cotton spinning?" So a noble duke is said to have inquired, when asked for a contribution from his gallery to the Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. It would seem that the Manchester Council shares this view. Manchester, in spite of some good individual buildings, is undeniably an ugly city, and each generation of citizens accepts the fact, or at least does nothing to alter it. It is not that Manchester cares only for material things; libraries, education and to some extent music, she is ready to pay for, but pictures, sculpture and design evidently seem to her a waste of money. During the economy period of 1931 the annual expenditure of £2,000 on works of art, which had never been increased since 1882, was cut out for five years, and even after that period only half of the grant was restored. In the realm of art, Manchester has hardly progressed in the hundred years. What was good enough for her in 1838 is still considered good enough for her to-day, whereas she soon outgrew the first Reference Library.

The small annual expenditure and many generous gifts have enlarged the scope of the Gallery, but owing to the restricted space, its possessions cannot be shown to advantage.¹ The com-

¹ The ratepayers have never spent a penny of capital in connection with the Gallery.

paratively small contents of the Institution, when handed over in 1882, consisted almost entirely of paintings and sculpture. Now, in addition to a large collection of pictures (mainly of the English school but including a number of foreign examples) and sculpture, there is a fine group of early English water colours and representative sections of Chinese, Continental and English pottery and porcelain, Chinese jade, English glass, silver and furniture, Oriental arms and armour, Eastern and European embroideries and English costumes. There is also an Old Manchester and Salford Collection, and an exhibition of dolls, toys and dolls' houses which is of particular interest to children. Modern craftwork is also represented, and a beginning has been made with a collection of industrial art.

The Rutherford bequest¹ of over a thousand pieces of modern art deserves notice, because from it loans are made to schools in the city, and to Art Galleries and Schools of Art and secondary schools in Lancashire and Yorkshire. This "lending library" of works of art is the only one in existence, and is much appreciated.

Most of the branch galleries came to the Committee as a result of the activities of the Parks Committee. Where a house was included with the park, as at Queens Park, Heaton Park, Platt Fields, Wythenshawe, Fletcher Moss gardens, it was handed over for the Art Gallery Committee to run as a branch gallery, some with permanent, and some with temporary exhibitions. The Horsfall Art Museum, which only came under the control of the Art Gallery Committee in 1918, had a different beginning. It was initiated by Mr. T. C. Horsfall under the inspiration of John Ruskin in 1877, years before there was a municipal art gallery. It consists chiefly of a collection of pictures for school children made by Mr. Horsfall, and was for a time housed in some disused rooms at the top of the Town Hall, but in 1886 it was moved to Ancoats Hall, where it has remained ever since. There is a full-time curator who also runs a children's theatre, in which a play is produced every week by the Ancoats children. The idea of the founder that the museum should be a place of entertainment, as well as a help to education, has always been in the minds of those responsible for it.

In 1895 the Board of Education—or, as it was then, the Committee of Council for Education—allowed visits by children to

museums under the charge of a teacher to count as attendance at school. This was largely due to the action of the Manchester Museum¹ Committee and the Manchester School Board. During the war, visits to museums and art galleries were extended, and now form an integral part of the children's education.

In these ways Manchester tries to make up to some extent for not having an up-to-date building large enough to house permanent and temporary exhibitions of pictures, sculpture, craftwork and industrial design.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

If Manchester had lost any reputation it had a hundred years ago as a lover of art, its record with regard to Public Libraries is perhaps some compensation. In August 1851 "A Bill for enabling Town Councils to establish Public Libraries and Museums" by levying a rate not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £ was passed. It was a permissive measure, that is to say, it had to be adopted by a town before it came into operation, and it gave no sanction for the purchase of books, although the Council could incur a lavish expenditure for buildings and bookcases. This was, in the case of some individual towns, as in that of Manchester, remedied by powers obtained in a local Act² and was remedied nationally in 1855, when the limit was raised to 1d. rate.

Before the Act of Parliament was passed, a public subscription had been started in Manchester in the autumn of 1850 by Sir John Potter, then Mayor, the son of the first Mayor of Manchester. At a dinner "the subscription list, opened on the Exchange, went round the table with the wine and was rapidly and liberally filled up,"³ and before any appeal was made to the public, Sir John Potter had already collected the sum of £4,300. A committee was appointed to canvass for further subscriptions, and to organize the institution, with Dr. John Watts, later one of the first members of the Manchester School Board, and Dr. John Leigh, later the first

¹ The Manchester Museum is not a municipal institution but part of the University.

² Manchester New Streets Act, 1853.

³ *Free Lending Libraries*, by Edward Edwards, p. 65.

Medical Officer of Health, as secretaries. Subscriptions came from all sections of the population.

At a meeting of this committee in January 1851, it was decided to appoint Edward Edwards as Librarian. He had previously been an assistant at the British Museum, where his appointment had terminated in May 1850. He was one of the great pioneers of the free library movement, and had given evidence before the Parliamentary Committee on the subject in 1849. The building known as the Hall of Science in Campfield, which had been the meeting place in 1840 of the followers of Robert Owen, was purchased and adapted, and 18,000 volumes bought.

A fortnight before the library was opened,¹ a poll was taken of the ratepayers on the question as to whether or not a rate should be levied for the maintenance of the library. Out of a third who voted, only forty were against the proposal. The Free Library at Manchester was transferred to the Corporation on September 1, 1852, and Sir John Potter was elected the first Chairman of the Library Committee.

To Manchester goes the honour of maintaining the first library under the Act of 1850. Small but useful collections of books had previously been formed, chiefly by donation, at Warrington and at Salford, as appendages to museums maintained under the provisions of "The Museums Act" of 1845, Warrington having adopted this Act in 1848 and Salford in 1849.²

The inaugural ceremony of the Manchester Free Library took place on September 2nd, and Charles Dickens and William Thackeray were both present.

The Manchester Free Library was not only the first library established under the Act of 1850,³ but was the first institution in the country which combined a Free Reference Library open to all comers, without introduction or recommendation of any kind, with a Free Lending Library, open to all persons who produced a voucher signed by two burgesses of either Manchester or Salford who were willing to become guarantors for the return of the books lent. This system was new in England. No lending library had ever before made its books so accessible, nor had any rate-purchased

¹ September 2, 1852.

² *Memoirs of Libraries*, by Edward Edwards, vol. i, p. 794.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 792.

books ever before been placed in a library, either for borrowing or for reference purposes.

Four days after the opening, the rooms were thronged with readers and within the first year 61,080 volumes had been issued in the Reference Department.

In 1857 the resources of a penny rate now being available, the Council established three branch lending libraries in Ancoats, Hulme and Ardwick.¹ The next few years were years of progress both in the building of branch libraries and in the increasing issue and circulation of books. The dangerous state of the building at Campfield, in addition to the inadequacy of the accommodation, made it necessary to seek fresh premises, and when the present Town Hall was opened (1877), the Reference Library was offered accommodation in the vacated Town Hall in King Street.

In 1885 and the years following, Manchester was engaged in extending her boundaries, and in order to provide libraries in the new districts, powers were taken in the Manchester Corporation Act of 1891 to raise the rate for library purposes from 1d. to 2d.²

The question of the extension of the Reference Library had been under consideration for several years, but had presented so many difficulties that each plan submitted had been found open to serious objections. In 1897³ the Council agreed to the Committee's suggestion of the sale of their present building, the old Town Hall, and the building of a new library on another site. Then began the long controversy about the Infirmary site and the possibility of a joint Art Gallery and Reference Library on it.⁴ The site in King Street was sold to Lloyds Bank for £161,415 and had to be handed over by 1913. As no conclusion had, by 1911, been reached about the use of the Infirmary site, the Council allowed the Libraries Committee to erect a temporary building on a portion of it.

The war years further postponed a decision, but in 1919 the temporary building being overcrowded and in every way unsuitable, the Council decided to combine the new library with the extension to the Town Hall, and the open competition was won by Mr. E. Vincent Harris. The fine new library was built

¹ Manchester City Council Minutes, May 13, 1857.

² In 1919 Manchester applied to the Local Government Board for a provisional order to amend this Act and substitute 3d. for 2d. but before it came into operation the General Libraries Act, 1919, abolished the limit to the rate.

³ Council Minutes, October 20, 1897.

⁴ See above, p. 275.

first and was opened in 1934. It contains nearly 800,000 volumes; a Commercial Library, the Henry Watson Music Library, with about 60,000 volumes, 20,000 copies of sheet music and 138,000 part-songs and anthems and which holds a unique position in this field; the Central Lending and Foreign Libraries, together with special rooms for research workers, an exhibition hall, a theatre and lecture rooms.

The arrangement, begun in 1878, of placing in the custody of the Reference Library authorities the collections of various local societies has been continued and extended since that time, and the deposit libraries now include, for instance, the collections of such societies as the Ancient Monument Society, the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, the Manchester Literary Club, the Manchester Repertory Theatre.

There are to-day twenty-three branch libraries, in addition to a travelling library to some of the new housing estates, and to libraries accommodated temporarily in schools. Last year 3,820,000 volumes were issued in the Lending Libraries.

The following table shows, in ten-year periods, from 1877 when figures were first available, the percentage of fiction and non-fiction issued from the branch libraries:

	VOLUMES ISSUED FOR HOME READING						
	1877	1887	1897	1908	1921	1927	1937
Fiction ..	56.08	68.27	81.93	82.69	74.72	77.49	64.81
Non-Fiction ..	43.92	31.73	18.07	17.31	25.28	22.51	35.19

Dividing the home-reading issues into fiction, non-fiction and children's books,¹ we find that to-day the highest percentage of fiction is issued by East Gorton (67.5 per cent) and the lowest by Rackhouse (52.3 per cent). The highest percentage of non-fiction is issued by Didsbury (32.2 per cent) and the lowest by Bradford (15.1 per cent), Ancoats (15.4 per cent) and Benchill (15.6 per cent). The highest percentage of children's books is issued by West Gorton (22.2 per cent) and the lowest by Openshaw (11.4 per

¹ We have omitted the Central Lending Library as no children's books are issued there. It is intended largely for the kind of reader who makes use of the Reference Library, so it is not surprising that it has the lowest fiction issues (40.2 per cent) and the highest non-fiction (59.3 per cent). The total issues have increased by 33.6 per cent since it was opened in 1934.

cent), Wilbraham (11.2 per cent) and Longsight (11.8 per cent).

The children's rooms, which have for many years been a feature of the branch libraries, started accidentally. "During the Cotton Famine in the early sixties of the last century the children used to crowd into the Deansgate branch to get warm, and there were so many that a special room was set apart for them. It was not until 1879 that the first proper juvenile room was opened at the Ancoats branch."¹ After the war, during which time they were closed, the children's rooms were re-opened and children, on the recommendation of their teacher, were admitted. A quiet place for reading, shelves containing special books for children and occasional talks by the assistant, attract many children to these rooms, which have flowers on the table and pictures on the walls. Co-operation between the schools and the Branch Librarian means that these two branches of the education services are linked together, and children are encouraged while at school to read for enjoyment and to get into the habit of using the libraries when they leave school.

The Library services cost the ratepayer 4½d. in the £, and not even the Ratepayers' Association suggests any reduction.

¹ *Manchester Evening News*, November 29, 1919. Report of paper by Mr. Ernest Axon on "Schools and Libraries."

CHAPTER VIII

HOUSING, PARKS AND TOWN PLANNING

HOUSING

As we saw in Chapter 1, Manchester, like other rapidly increasing industrial cities, had grown without any plan or any regard for the health and convenience of its inhabitants. The growth had been so rapid that the necessity for housing the large populations that poured into the newly developed industrial centres had blinded men's eyes to the evils that were being created. Many of the evils of crowding human beings so closely together with insufficient air and light arose, too, from the necessity, when trams were non-existent and streets badly paved and lit, for the workers in each mill to live near their work. The mill-owners, who were so much praised by visitors from Europe and other parts of England, the Ashworths at Turton, the Ashtons at Hyde and the Gregs at Styal, were those who had formed a colony round their mills, situated on a country stream. The mill, the owner's and manager's houses, cottages for workers, a school or at least a Sunday school, a recreation room and playing fields forming a close community, were survivals of the period of country mills worked by water power. When mills were transferred to the towns, the land round about them was hastily seized by the speculative builder and as many workers as possible were housed on it. It was not until the bad results of this uncontrolled activity were manifest that public opinion began to try to exercise some control.

There were some attempts to control building even in 1792, when the Police Commissioners for Manchester took powers in their local Act to insist on party walls.¹ This was in order to prevent the spread of fire, which was responsible for great loss of property in the days when a plentiful and available supply of water was non-existent and an efficient force of firemen was almost as necessary as an efficient police force. But in those early days of

¹ 32 Geo. III, c. 69.

the Police Commissioners there was hardly any staff to see that the regulations were carried out. Fifty years later, members of the Town Council stated that this regulation had not been observed. In any case it only applied to the township of Manchester.

In 1830 the Manchester Commissioners made another attempt to regulate building. This time it was a provision that no street or court should be laid out of a less width than eight yards, the width to be measured beyond all areas, steps, windows or other projections. This meant a real advance, for previously it was only the main streets that had been regulated and, as it was easier to control the laying out of streets than the insulation of party walls, the regulation was enforced and was considered so valuable that this section was re-enacted in the Manchester Improvement Act of 1851.¹

When the new Council settled down after the four stormy years of the fight for its existence, one of its first acts was to tackle the state of the poorer districts of the town. Several of the leading members, the Mayor, Thomas Potter, and the young Town Clerk, Joseph Heron, had served on the Special Board of Health appointed to deal with the cholera epidemic in 1831-32. Although as we saw,² the scientific knowledge of that day was unable to explain the way in which cholera and the various "miasmic fevers" were propagated, that there was a close connection between the worst overcrowded and filthy dwellings and the number of victims was soon realized by the doctors, like Dr. Kay, who attended the cases in their homes, and by the members of the Board, who themselves visited some of the worst of the hovels which a writer later said "cannot be visited by any save those who possess the firmest of hearts and the strongest of stomachs." They never forgot what they had seen. As soon as they had the larger powers given to them by the Town Council, with a reasonable area to control, they set to work energetically to deal with what they realized was an urgent problem.

The first local Act obtained by the new Council³ was more comprehensive and in some ways more important than any that have since been obtained. This was partly due to the fact that at that date there was no general legislation dealing with public

¹ Section 50.

² See above, p. 163.

³ Manchester Police Regulation Act, 7 & 8 Vic., c. 40.

health or housing, and Liverpool in 1842 and 1846 and Manchester in 1844 got powers in their local Acts which were not made general until later. Even so, as we shall see, some of the regulations were more stringent in the Manchester Act than in the Public Health Act of 1848.

Amongst the many and varied provisions of the 1844 Act, which incorporated all the useful parts of preceding Acts of the Commissioners for Manchester and for the various townships, the ones that concern us here are those dealing with back-to-back houses.¹

The greatest evil that arose from the crowding together of houses before there was any system of main drainage was that of the disposal of refuse, personal as well as household. Privy middens and ashpits, which was the accepted method even in the houses of the well-to-do, were far too few. In the working class parts of the town, one privy for twelve buildings inhabited by seventy-eight people was common, in fact about a third of the whole population of Manchester lived under these conditions.² The reason that there were so few of these conveniences was that they had to be put outside the house, and land being so valuable for building, the owners did not want to waste any that could not bring in rent. There had been no regulations to force the builder to provide a backyard, a privy or ashpit for each house, and, in fact, builders had evolved the highly ingenious system of making two houses out of a plot of land that would normally hold one. A building with two fronts and no backs had a wall down the middle which divided it into two houses, each containing usually two rooms, one up and one down. There was no through ventilation, no backyard, no conceivable place for the privy and the ashpit. One of these conveniences would, therefore, be provided for a row of these back-to-back houses either at the entrance to the court, if they were built in courts, or somewhere in the street.

These privies and ashpits, as can well be imagined, soon became so full that the contents overflowed over the seat into the road, and oozed into the cellars and ground floors of the adjoining houses, for they were usually placed right up against the walls of

¹ Manchester Police Regulation Act, Sections 65 and 66.

² Report of Building and Sanitary Regulations Committee of Manchester Council, 1848.

a house to save space. They were supposed to be emptied at night, and as the manure was valuable, those who took it away asked little payment. But "it is a notorious fact that in Manchester the parties who engage to empty these places are thieves. They go to a place and engage to empty it for perhaps a shilling. They take away that which they can make money of and leave the rest, so that in point of fact the place is in a worse state after they have done what they call emptying it, than before."¹

In order to cope with this problem, the Council got power from Parliament to do two things. In future no house² was to be built without a privy with proper doors and coverings and an ashpit, either in the house or in a yard attached to the house (except that with the consent of the Council, houses built in courts might use some privies in common), and, more stringent still, owners of existing houses³ to which no sufficient privy and ashpit was attached had to provide one to the satisfaction of the Council.

It is interesting to compare this regulation with the sections in the Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847, and the Public Health Act of 1848, by which privies and ashpits were only to be provided "if there be room without disturbing any building." This proviso was in the Manchester Bill when it came before the Council, but the words were struck out on the initiative of Abel Heywood and William Neild, and in opposition to the advice of the Mayor, Alexander Kay, who said that this proposal would rouse powerful opposition from property owners. Curious though it seems to us now, when threatened private interests organize themselves so effectually, the opposition did not materialize and the clause also went through Parliament unopposed. The result of this legislation was that from 1844 the building of back-to-back houses ceased within the municipal borough of Manchester, although it continued in outlying districts such as Bradford and Openshaw, which were not added to the city until later. Back-to-back houses were not peculiar to Manchester and were not prohibited by general legislation until 1925.⁴

As soon as the 1844 Act came into force, the Council set up a Building and Sanitary Regulations Committee to deal with the

¹ Evidence of Town Clerk before House of Lords Committee on Manchester Improvement Bill, 1845.

² *Ibid.*, s. 65.

³ 7 & 8 Vic., c. 40, s. 66.

⁴ Housing Act, 1925.

housing regulations. This Committee consisted of eleven members and the Mayor. They tackled their formidable job with enthusiasm. They decided to meet every week, on Thursday at six o'clock, but after three months changed to fortnightly meetings at an earlier hour. There was an average attendance of six members, and the record of the work of the first year is startling. 9,400 dwellings (8,182 houses and 1,218 cellars), containing a population of 47,000 people, 19 per cent of the total population, had been inspected and dealt with. Before the alterations there was one privy for twelve dwellings and sixty people, afterwards there was one for every three dwellings and twelve inhabitants. It does not now seem a high standard, but it meant a real advance in sanitation in those days.

The Committee received reports from the Inspector of Nuisances of buildings without proper privy accommodation, and appointed four sub-committees to visit, where necessary, the properties in the various parts of the town. A surveyor was appointed to prepare plans, and printed copies of the regulations were distributed to builders. Sometimes the owners made the necessary alterations willingly by pulling down a house and erecting a privy; sometimes there were difficulties which were settled by the Committee. Occasionally an owner was summoned before the magistrates if he remained obdurate. The cost of the privies varied between £3 and £10, and often a cottage worth £40 and £50 had to be pulled down to make four privies!¹ It is little wonder that property owners were roused to opposition, and even more remarkable that so much was accomplished with no charge at all to the rates.

The other part of the Committee's work consisted in passing plans of new buildings so far as the "conveniences" were concerned, and this must have been no small task when new houses were being erected all over the town, sometimes at the rate of 2,000 a year.

The work of the Committee slackened speed after the first magnificent attack owing to opposition and legal obstructions, but by 1851, six years after its work had begun, the Committee had dealt with 17,927 dwellings, over 35 per cent of all the dwellings in Manchester, at the rate of 2,980 a year. This record of "reconditioning," which has been particularly Manchester's method

¹ The Improvement of Manchester—a Report setting forth the plan proposed by the Town's Improvement Company, 1845, p. 32.

of dealing with slums in the past, rather than the more spectacular and expensive method of clearance, was not reached again until 1910-13, when an average of 2,500 houses a year were dealt with: although, of course, reconditioning in the later years meant something much more thorough than an increase in the number of privies and ash pits.¹

When the Council found that in some of the worst parts of the town more drastic action was necessary than the provision of extra privies, a special sub-committee was appointed to visit and report. They found "alleys and entries not more than one yard to four yards wide," while the "fronts of the cottages are bounded by high walls which form the backs of the other cottages," and as an aggravation of these evils, "these courts and alleys have no outlet at one end." "The arrangements (if such they can be called) of the privies and other conveniences are of the most disgusting character . . . and the inhabitants of these crowded places are doomed to familiarize themselves with scenes degrading to humanity." As, they say, "the removal of a wall, or a shed, or a privy, no matter for what object, is an interference with the rights of property," the Council resolved to promote a Bill giving the Corporation the necessary powers of compulsory acquisition. Manchester was one of the first authorities to be given this power.² There was, however, no power to levy a rate for this purpose, and the only available money was that provided by profits from the gas undertaking.

We do not wish to exaggerate the results of these early efforts at "reconditioning." Apart from the important fact that the 1844 Act prevented the building of any more back-to-backs in the municipal borough of Manchester, the Committee merely succeeded in improving slightly the abominable existing sanitary conditions. Much more drastic action—a supply of water to each house, water closets, a main drainage system, which, as we saw,³ Manchester was late in adopting—was necessary before the standard reached anything that we should now consider satisfactory; but the determination to tackle the problem, and to get such drastic powers from Parliament in advance of general legislation, shows the spirit of those early councillors.

¹ See below.

² Manchester Improvement Act, 1845, 8 & 9 Vic., c. 141.

³ See above, p. 182.

Unfortunately this spirit did not last, and for the next forty years Manchester, instead of leading the country in housing, fell behind public opinion as it was manifested in the various Acts of Parliament that resulted from the disclosures made by Royal Commissions.

Manchester did not get power to abolish cellar dwellings until 1853.¹ It had been calculated twenty years before that there were about 5,000 cellars with a population of 15,000² and this had increased with the rush of population to the town. In 1853 a report³ had been made on overcrowding in cellars and houses. In eight cellars in a workers' tenement in Oldham Road, sixty-five people were sleeping, mostly on the ground, and in one cellar where ten people were found, the father, mother and grown-up daughter shared a bed. In the same building there were five dwellings consisting each of two rooms, one up and one down. In these, sixty people were sleeping, eighteen of them being in one house.

But the energetic action of the Building and Sanitary Regulations Committee had roused the property owners, who first made their appearance under the title of the "House Owners' Guardian Association." Although an attempt to get compensation for the cellar owners—some of whom were members of the Council—failed, the Association forced the Council to modify its regulations, so that only those cellars that were deemed to be public nuisances could be closed; others could be re-opened, if satisfactory alterations were made. After six years only 176 cellars had been closed. "No doubt," as the Building and Sanitary Committee, which had been authorized to carry out the work, said, "the desire not duly to interfere with the owners . . . has induced the Committee hitherto to sanction very moderate conditions in relation to cellars."⁴ New regulations were then adopted, though they were still less stringent than those under the Public Health Act of 1848.⁵

There was a spurt of housing activity in the 'sixties, due to two causes. In 1866 there was again the fear of a cholera epidemic in England which, however, did not visit Manchester. But, in order

¹ Manchester Corporation New Streets Act, 1853.

² Manchester Statistical Society, Report on Conditions of the working classes in the Large Towns, 1834, 1835, 1836, pp. 8 and 9.

³ *Report on the sanitary condition of certain parts of Manchester*, by A. T. Waters, 1853.

⁴ This act was not in force in Manchester.

⁵ Council Minutes, January 6, 1861.

to be prepared if it should come, the Guardians of the Chorlton Union called for reports of the sanitary conditions in the Union. The accounts of parts of Ardwick, Chorlton-on-Medlock and Hulme show that in spite of the work of the Building and Regulations Committee, conditions were appalling.

In the same year the Social Science Conference, which was devoted entirely to housing, met in Manchester. It was presided over by Lord Shaftesbury who, in his opening address, vigorously attacked slums: "The master evil which nullifies every effort for the benefit of the working people, which leaves us no rest, the evil that embraces and intensifies all the others, the hotbed of pauperism, immorality, disease and drunkenness, the evil that is negative in preventing any improvement and positive in maturing every mischief, that lies at the bottom of nineteen-twentieths of the corruptions that beset our social state and forms the crowning abomination of the whole, is the domiciliary condition of many thousands of our people. There are hundreds where there should be tens, and thousands where there should be hundreds. The over-crowding is frightful; it disgusts every physical and moral sense: and the more so when we see it as a growing, not a declining evil."¹

Two Manchester men, A. Ransome and W. Royston, members of the Sanitary Association, gave a report on the health of Manchester and Salford, in the course of which they described the conditions of housing in Ancoats, and said that "no real change for the better can be made without a complete remodelling of the sanitary department of the Corporation and the appointment of a responsible Medical Officer of Health."²

When challenged in the Council to reply to these attacks, the Chairman of the Sanitary Committee said that the statements in Mr. Ransome's paper were too true. He indicated that the Committee was held up by the Council.

The result, however, was that by-laws, for which power had been obtained in 1865, were finally adopted. These insisted upon a back yard of 70 square feet for each house. By-laws were also adopted for common lodging-houses and for houses let in

¹ The Social Science Congress in Manchester, *Manchester Guardian*, October 4, 1866.

² Power to appoint a M.O.H. had been given by the Public Health Act of 1848, and Liverpool by a private Act in 1842 had been the first city to appoint one, in 1846.

lodgings in order to control overcrowding and cleanliness, and a Medical Officer of Health was at last appointed in 1868. He tackled the cellar problem, and by 1874 was able to report that all except a few occupied by old people had been closed.

A surprising clause was inserted in the Manchester Waterworks and Improvement Act, 1867,¹ by which houses certified as unfit for habitation by two inspectors, or by the Medical Officer of Health, could be closed without compensation; and the Council also worked under the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act of 1868, so far as that gave powers to insist upon structural alterations or demolition where houses were unfit. A Health Committee was set up which took over the work of the Buildings and Sanitary Regulations Committee.

The reforming zeal of the Council, mostly urged from without, did not last long. One of the first actions of the new Medical Officer of Health was an attempt to insist upon a reconstruction of ash pits and privies, and the provision of a ventilating shaft to carry off the fumes, particularly in new houses. Immediately a deputation from four associations of property owners and ratepayers came to the Health Committee to demand withdrawal, and this was followed by a petition to the next meeting of the Council, signed by 500 property owners. The Council bowed to the storm and curtailed its activities for a time. It succeeded, however, in setting up a direct labour department to carry out the alterations for which the owners paid. They found this cost them less than if they had to engage a private builder to do the job. The Health Committee, against whose activities a continuous campaign was kept up by some of the leading members of the Council, could only proceed very slowly with closing orders, whether of cellars or of houses declared unfit for human habitation.

Although the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act of 1875 gave power to demolish a slum area and to rebuild on the site, the Health Committee decided to continue their policy of gradual reconditioning instead of attempting more drastic action. The Medical Officer of Health made a map of all the houses in the city, coloured according to the age of the buildings. He felt that the inner ring needed more drastic treatment than reconditioning, but doubt as to the advantages of barrack buildings, as tenements were

¹ Section 41.

called, and a calculation that seven or eight million pounds would be necessary to clear and rebuild the whole of the inner zone, decided the Committee to continue on its previous course.

Meanwhile slum clearance had been most effectually carried out as a by-product of the commercial development of the city. The railway companies had done some noble work unconsciously. The Central Station and Oxford Road Station were built over that part of the curve of the Medlock described in the first chapter. Victoria Station and London Road Station replaced more unsavoury areas. As Dr. Leigh wrote, "the exigencies of commerce and the spirited policy of the Improvement Committee, aided by the funds supplied by the Gas Works, have swept the greater part of them away, and palatial warehouses occupy the sites where, some years ago, fever dens alone were found."¹

But bad conditions still remained, and the demolition of houses whether by the Council or by outside agencies, intensified the problem of overcrowding. So far, Manchester had made no attempt to provide for the people displaced, and there had always been strong opposition to the suggestion that it should do so. Private enterprise, the Council was sure, could and would provide. The Medical Officer of Health pointed out that it was no more Socialism to provide houses at rents that the people could pay than to make roads, drainage schemes, or to build harbours. But he was before his time when he said, "If helping the poor in this way—doing for them what they cannot do for themselves, or aiding them to do what they cannot accomplish alone—be socialism or communism, the more we have of it the better, when wisely and judiciously administered."² So long as compensation had to be paid, so long, he realized, the existing Acts would be a dead letter. This was certainly the heyday of *laissez-faire* as applied to housing, but Manchester does not deserve more blame than other cities. The cost of clearance and rebuilding was so great, and the loss in letting tenements at rents which the poorest people could pay, was so large that the 1875 Act soon became a dead letter all over the country.

The continual pressure from without, the excellent reports by the Medical Officer of Health, and the passing in 1885 of a new

¹ Medical Officer of Health's Report, 1878.

² Ibid., 1884.

Housing Act which somewhat reduced the heavy compensation burden, roused the Council to action. It appointed the Unhealthy Dwellings Committee with Alderman Walter Smith as chairman, the veteran reformer Abel Heywood, and the energetic Councillor Goldschmidt—father of the present Alderman—as members. There was still great opposition and much obstruction in the Council, and the Committee had to go slowly, but it continued to close houses unfit for human habitation without compensation. As it had no power to demolish but only to close, it placated its opponents by paying £15 for each house that was pulled down. It also contributed towards the cost of sanitary alterations that were necessary to make the house fit. New building by-laws were demanded by the Sanitary Association, and the Medical Officer of Health said: "The old houses are rotten from age and neglect. The new houses often commence where the old houses leave off and are rotten from the first. It is quite certain that the working classes are largely housed in dwellings which would be unsuitable even if they were not overcrowded."¹ Two years later, in his farewell report to the Council, he reviews the housing situation. "Let anyone accustomed to a better condition in life put his head into one of them and he will be met with a mephitic atmosphere, the like of which is not to be found in the domicile of any other animal. . . . No animal could live in them and flourish. To describe their nauseous character, I have sometimes said, in a bantering spirit, put a pig into one of them and feed him on the best for a twelvemonth, and he will come out a lean pig; and yet industrious men and women and little children live in these, and the weak frames and pallid faces tell their surroundings. . . ."²

All this at last had some effect. In 1890 new building by-laws, insisting upon a damp-proof course and preventing a building density of more than forty to the acre were adopted. The houses built under these by-laws "belong to the better type of working-class houses found in the outlying districts. They are still in long rows, in not very wide streets, and have no gardens. They are narrow fronted, but some have bay windows, and five-roomed houses became more common. The third small bedroom is found over the projecting scullery. Baths are rarely found in these houses.

¹ Medical Officer of Health's Report, 1886.

² *Ibid.*, 1888.

But the sanitary arrangements are reasonably good: they have water closets and water laid on in the houses."¹

In the same year a few areas were cleared, and Pollard Street, Rochdale Road, Oldham Road Dwellings were erected on the sites. Reconditioning now went on energetically, about 1,000 houses a year were dealt with, but overcrowding was beginning to cause the authorities concern.

The belief in private enterprise, even when free from competition by rate-aided schemes, had received some bad shocks. By 1904, for instance, 6,000 houses, mostly back-to-backs, had been closed under the 1867 Act, but less than 3,000 had been substituted by the owners on or near the sites. The opposition in the Council to the policy of closing found the argument that closing merely increased overcrowding, an effective election cry, and for a time the work slowed down. The number of new houses built each year had been declining, and this undoubtedly intensified the problem.

In 1901 the Council bought 238 acres at Blackley, and proposed to build 200 houses as a small effort to deal with overcrowding. This was the first experiment by the Council at building a housing estate, and a Citizens' Association, led by Mr. T. C. Horsfall, who had done so much for the cause of town planning and housing in England, made suggestions about the lay-out and types of houses. As a result of these suggestions the plans were altered, and instead of all the houses being two up and two down, the majority were planned as three-bedroomed houses with baths. The lay-out was also amended so as to allow for more sunshine in the houses. This promising scheme was delayed on the ground of economy, and the first lot of houses were only built in 1905.

This Citizens' Association, with T. R. Marr as secretary, carried out an exhaustive survey of housing conditions in Manchester and Salford in 1904. Selected districts in Ancoats, St. John's Ward, Angel Meadow and Ardwick were surveyed in detail, in the way that recent surveys have made familiar to us. Photographs of back-to-back houses, courts, culs-de-sac, showing closets and water taps used in common by inhabitants of many houses, give a vivid picture of the slums fifty years ago. In one street in Angel Meadow, forty houses were dependent upon one water tap. Out of 136 houses, only twenty had water closets—the rest pail closets. "In

¹ *The Re-building of Manchester*, by E. D. Simon and J. Inman, p. 12.

several streets the closets are placed, as is usual with back-to-back houses, in a group and are entered directly from the street. Used as they are by members of more than one household, and by casual visitors from the streets, the sense of responsibility for keeping the closets clean and wholesome seems to have departed from the district. The doors stand open and frequently display a reeking, filthy and sickening accumulation which reflects not only on the dwellers in the district, but on the citizens at large who allow such things to exist."¹

The Report urged a comprehensive housing policy for the whole of Manchester and Salford area—an anticipation of Town Planning schemes. This should also provide, it said, not only for the demolition of unhealthy dwellings, but a statutory obligation to re-house the tenants. It also urged the two Councils to make more use of their powers under the Housing Acts of 1890 and 1900, and to "erect in different parts of the town and country contiguous to the towns, groups of working-class cottages, with adequate yard space and with small gardens." This is the first mention of gardens in connection with municipal housing, which hitherto, as we have seen, had been confined to tenement buildings in the centre of the town. These groups of cottages would not only provide part of the necessary supply of working-class houses, but raise the standard for other builders. It is interesting, in the light of later developments, to find that at that date even so advanced a reformer as Mr. Marr felt that it was far beyond the power of the Council to supply all the necessary working-class houses.

Once again the Council had been stimulated from without, but this time the publication of the Report was followed by the election of T. R. Marr, its secretary, to the Council.² The most ambitious reconditioning campaign was now launched and brought to a successful close. This was also helped by the action of the Health Committee, which had entered upon a programme of rapid conversion of pail closets to water closets.³ In the course of this work, the sanitary inspectors found many houses that should have been closed as unfit under the 1867 Act, and reported them to the Unhealthy Dwellings Committee, of which Councillor Marr had become chairman.

¹ *Housing Conditions in Manchester and Salford*, by T. R. Marr, p. 62.

² 1905.

³ See above, p. 183.

Between 1910 and 1913, 7,700 houses were dealt with. Back-to-back houses, which had numbered 10,000 in 1885, were reduced to under 100, and altogether nearly 25,000 insanitary houses were dealt with in eighteen years.

The Council had, in 1906, decided no longer to pay the owner for demolishing insanitary property, and this decision enabled the work to proceed more quickly and more cheaply. The saving to the rates in one year was calculated at £6,000.

Agitation outside the Council, together with the enthusiasm and determination of a small group of reformers, chiefly the new Labour members on the Sanitary Committee, kept the problem of housing in the forefront. Whilst the development of the Blackley estate was held up with all the arts of obstruction, and the Ratepayers' Association objected to any housing schemes that entailed a charge on the rates, the policy of reconditioning forged ahead. The Committee met once a week—as its predecessor in 1844 had done—and dealt with houses at the rate of 2,500 a year, the highest average that had ever been reached.

The record of persistent reconditioning since 1844 is the brightest spot in the history of Manchester housing. Although it was subject to ups and downs, to periods of greater and lesser activity, it was pursued systematically for seventy years, and the standard gradually rose. The fact that the small amount of enthusiasm available for housing reform—characteristic of the whole of the country—was never squandered in Manchester as in some cities on spectacular schemes of demolition, acquisition and rebuilding which, at a time when there was no subsidy from national funds, cost the rates so much that reaction was inevitable, meant that advance, though less heroic, was more continuous. The result is that, bad though our present slums are, there is nothing in Manchester to equal conditions that can be found in other large cities such as London, Liverpool, Birmingham and Glasgow.

But the Council as a whole refused to face the problem of overcrowding, and in other ways was hardly enthusiastic about housing. A few small re-housing schemes had a stormy passage through the Council. One was cancelled because its opponents found that there were many empty houses in the city, although very few of them were available at rents which the poorest and most overcrowded tenants could pay.

Re-housing schemes in Rochdale Road, Temple Estate and Barrack Street, Hulme, were held up for years by opposition in the Council, and it was only pressure from the residents in the areas that eventually forced them through.

Although the building of houses practically stopped during the war years, the interest in housing, as in other social problems, was quickened. Sir Edward Holt, a man of great public spirit, whose party had opposed the housing schemes, referred to his change of heart. He said: "One of the larger problems you will have before you will be the question of housing. I, for one, have always opposed housing by the Council, because the Council have never been able to make it pay. Why not, I do not know. But my opinions are changing. . . . Housing is a question that vitally concerns the health of the people; the health of your people concerns your pocket, because a life saved means so much money in the pocket of the nation, for life is worth so much money, looked at in a commercial sense. . . . It will be your duty to see whether you can carry out some scheme of housing that will meet the necessities of the poorest of our working classes. . . . Whether it raised our rates or not, we shall have to do our best to alter the state of things in connection with the housing of this city."¹

A special committee to inquire into the housing conditions of Manchester and to make recommendations for the provision of a sufficient supply of suitable houses was appointed. Unfortunately, the committee consisted of a majority of councillors who were more concerned with the fate of private enterprise than with a bold solution of the problem. It reported in 1918. It pointed out how private enterprise, before it was hampered by by-laws, high local rates and high sanitary requirements, the Finance Act of 1909-10 and the Rent Restriction Act, had provided adequately for the public, but said it appeared as if State aid was now necessary to help private enterprise, and subsidized rents, although "unsound in principle and unfair in practice," were possibly inevitable during the transition period after the war. It recommended the Sanitary Committee to see how far it could co-operate with private builders in securing the provision of houses for the working classes.² It little thought that the following year would find the Council, in

¹ Council Minutes, October 11, 1916. Speech on receiving the Freedom of the City.

² Council Minutes, October 30, 1918.

common with local authorities all over England, launched upon a policy of municipal building, of which the end is not yet in sight.

During the war years the condition of the slums had been getting worse, as reconditioning stopped, new houses had not been built even at the pre-war level, and overcrowding was therefore much greater. The Tudor Walters Committee which reported in 1918 had set a completely new standard of working-class housing, as anyone can see who compares the municipal housing estates with the rows of houses with no gardens, mostly containing only two bedrooms, and many without a bath, which were built in the years preceding the war.

But this new standard, coinciding with the high post-war costs of building, made a subsidy from national funds essential if the houses were to be available for the working classes.

The enthusiasm with which Mr. Lloyd George launched his "Homes for Heroes" campaign, coupled with the bribe to local authorities of the payment from national funds of all expenditure over a 1d. rate, induced the Manchester Council, with others, to venture upon municipal building. Land was bought in the suburbs for estates to be laid out on the Tudor Walters plan. Manchester's partiality for private enterprise was shown, however, in the policy adopted in 1919, and maintained ever since, of limiting municipal building to houses to let. She not only refused to sell her working-class houses, for the sound reason that it was the prime duty of the municipality to provide for those—by far the largest number—who could not afford to buy houses, but also prevented opposition from private builders by leaving that field to them. The 1923 Housing Act gave a subsidy to private builders, as well as to local authorities, and the Manchester Corporation made full use of its powers to lend money on mortgage to those who wished to buy their houses.

The Public Health Committee, as the Sanitary Committee was now called, had dealt with housing for many years, but it was soon realized that building on an unprecedented scale demanded a special committee. The Housing Committee was therefore set up in 1919 to deal with the building of houses, although the management and letting of them was retained by the Public Health Committee until 1932. After a keen fight, a Housing Director was appointed who could give his whole time to the work.

With the exception of Wythenshawe, to which we refer later, the record of Manchester's post-war housing has not been remarkable. The following table shows the number of houses built up to date by Birmingham, Liverpool, Nottingham and Manchester since 1919, and the number of those built under the Slum Clearance Act, 1930.

		Population ¹	Total Number of Dwellings Built since 1919	Number of those for Slum Clearance
Birmingham	...	1,038,000	47,265	6,708
Liverpool	...	867,110	32,317	3,913
Nottingham	...	283,030	15,092	2,686
Manchester	...	766,311	27,426	5,705

It will be seen that in proportion to their population the other towns have built more houses than Manchester, although the difference between it and Liverpool is slight. But, as regards slum clearance, Manchester has done as well as any, except Nottingham. Manchester has already re-housed a population of 22,000 from slum clearance areas, and a further 5,000 dwellings are now being built.

Differential rents have to be given under the Slum Clearance Act, so the poorest people—if they inhabit a slum area—are now being catered for. The Housing Act of 1935, dealing with overcrowding, is at last an attempt on the part of the Government to prevent what has invariably been the result of all previous clearance schemes, namely, increased overcrowding in the neighbourhood. The Act hopes to prevent this by insisting upon the building by the municipality of the necessary houses at suitable rents, so that those who persist in allowing overcrowding can then be prosecuted. It is unfortunate that the standard of overcrowding adopted by the Government is lower than that known as the "Manchester standard." The standard of overcrowding usually employed by local authorities was more than two persons per room, excluding the scullery but counting in the sitting-room, and counting children under two as half a person. This took no account of the separation

¹ From the *Municipal Year Book*, 1937. The figure for Manchester's population differs from that quoted elsewhere, which is that estimated by the M.O.H. The figure from the *Municipal Year Book* is given here so that it can be compared with those of other cities.

of the sexes. In 1920 Manchester, on the initiative of E. D. Simon, who was then a member of the Public Health Committee, adopted a higher standard—not more than two persons per bedroom, the separation of the sexes over ten, and a separate bedroom for the parents. The reason that this standard is not generally adopted is said to be the difficulty of applying it to those places where it is customary to use a living room as a bedroom, but there can be little doubt that it sets a standard to which all national effort should be directed. The difference between the two standards was shown most strikingly when the survey of overcrowding in Manchester called for under the 1935 Act was published. This showed that only 2·1 per cent of the families in Manchester were overcrowded on the Government standard, and that 1,566 new houses would meet the need. This so obviously bore little relation to the condition that was known to exist according to any decent standard, that the Council demanded another survey on the Manchester standard. A sample was done, and the overcrowding was shown to be 11·3 per cent. It is hoped that Manchester will insist upon building enough houses—and getting grant from the Government on them all—to eliminate overcrowding on its own standard.

The case in which Manchester went ahead of public opinion in post-war housing was in its acquisition and development of the Wythenshawe Estate. An area of over 5,000 acres, 60 per cent of which is owned by the Corporation, on the south side of the River Mersey, was incorporated in the city in 1930, and is being developed as a satellite garden town. Under the control of Mr. Barry Parker, who had made his name as the town planner of Letchworth Garden City, this estate has been laid out to house eventually 100,000 people living both in municipal and in private enterprise houses. Two factory areas, shopping centres, open spaces, playing fields, cinemas, improved public-houses, are provided. An agricultural belt surrounds the area, on part of which a municipal golf course is planned. The Wythenshawe Special Committee, of which Alderman Jackson, the originator and the most active promoter of the scheme, was the first chairman and is still the most influential member, acts as landlord, and the other committees of the Council provide the necessary services. It is confidently anticipated that when the estate is fully developed, the return from ground rents will more than repay the cost of the capital invested by the rate-

payers. Although there was considerable opposition to this scheme, certainly the boldest that any municipality has yet embarked upon, from the Conservative party—with one or two important exceptions—the second and successful attempt to get the area incorporated in the city in 1930 put an end to all but factious opposition that finds no support in the Council. Members of all parties have co-operated to make Wythenshawe the success that it is rapidly becoming. This was recognized by the Departmental Committee on Garden Cities¹ when it recommended that the most hopeful line of garden city development lay in action by municipalities.

The position with regard to housing in Manchester can be expressed in figures. In April 1937 there were 201,381 houses in the city, of which 56,000 were built before the by-laws of 1868. Reconditioning can do no more and these must all be cleared.

When the Council has finished clearing the 12,000 with which it is now dealing, it will still have the biggest part of its task before it. When the Government speaks of nearing the end of its slum clearance programme, it must have overlooked Manchester.

Of the total number of houses in the city over 27,000 have been built by the Corporation since 1919. Most of these are built at 12 to the acre on estates laid out on the now familiar Tudor Walters plan. Seven thousand of these are in Wythenshawe. Flats have been built near the centre of the city and the internal arrangement of the municipal houses owes much to the recommendations of the Women's Advisory Committee. Some 17,792 houses have also been built since the war by private enterprise for those citizens who are able and who wish to own their houses.²

One of the black spots in Manchester's housing is the number of large houses previously occupied by the well-to-do and now let off in rooms, often single rooms, to working-class families. At present there are 7,000 of these on the official register of houses let in lodgings, and there may be more of them. It is not a new problem, but that it still exists proves, more than anything else, the shortage of housing accommodation at rents that the people can afford.

In the last few years, surveys of housing conditions in Manchester

¹ 1935.

² A large number of these houses lived in by Manchester people are just outside the city boundaries.

have again been made by public-spirited citizens—two, covering areas in Ancoats¹ (1928 and 1930), one behind London Road station (1931), one in Red Bank, and one in Chorlton-on-Medlock.² One of the areas surveyed in Ancoats was the same as that described in *Housing Conditions in Manchester and Salford in 1904*. It is possible, therefore, to assess the improvement made there in the intervening quarter of the century.

The density has been reduced from 47 houses per acre to 44.8 owing to the demolition of unfit houses and the reconditioning of back-to-backs. But there were still a few cases of only one water closet and one yard between two houses. Both surveys agree in condemning the monotonous, mean streets, lack of open spaces and green trees.

Reconditioning only affects the individual house; slum clearance on a large scale with a proper redevelopment scheme is the only hope for improvement of the areas as a whole.

Under the Arches, the London Road survey, deals with an area in which much of the property was built as far back as 1740, and although it had all been reconditioned, "it is not too sweeping a generalization to say that, with a few bright exceptions, the property throughout the area under consideration is damp, dismal, and dilapidated and can only relatively be considered fit for human habitation." It is some consolation to know that this is included in the Ancoats Slum Clearance scheme. Another scheme covers the area of Red Bank. But the areas in Ancoats and Chorlton-on-Medlock are not yet scheduled. They will, however, all be demolished when the Housing Committee has accomplished its programme of the inner ring of houses—considered by Dr. Leigh as long ago as 1878 to be suitable only for demolition. The existence after a hundred years of such houses is a reminder that we have still far to go before we can feel happy about the conditions under which many of our fellow citizens and large numbers of young children are still living. But, whereas the descriptions given by Dr. Kay and Engels were typical of the working-class areas a hundred years ago, those described in the modern surveys apply only to selected black spots. The execrable sanitary conditions at least have disappeared. Although baths are few and far between

¹ By the Manchester and District Regional Survey Society.

² By the Manchester and Salford Better Housing Council.

in the pre-1890 houses, each house has its own water supply, and practically every one has a separate back yard and water closet. The standard of working-class housing has improved beyond recognition. There are still intolerably bad spots that are a disgrace to a city of the size and importance of Manchester, but at least they are all known and marked down for clearance.

When we compare the post-war housing estates, and especially Wythenshawe, with conditions a hundred years ago, we can see the full effect of the century's progress in housing. There is still much to be done before every citizen is housed either in a separate cottage with a garden, or in a flat with green belts near at hand for gardens and allotments and playing fields. The Manchester of 2038 will probably be as different from the Manchester of to-day as this is from the city of 1838. Our ideas will change, our standard rise, and progress should be much more rapid.

PARKS

Manchester in the thirties was described as lacking any public walks and places for open-air recreation. The only walks were said by Dr. Kay to be along the turnpike roads, "alternatively dusty or muddy," and although this statement somewhat exaggerated the situation there was certainly no effort by the authorities to provide for the recreation of the people. Building operations were rapidly destroying country lanes and fields like those described by Mrs. Gaskell in *Mary Barton* at Greenheys. The township of Hulme which had only 5,000 houses in 1841 had over 10,000 by 1851.

Meanwhile Parliament had given a lead, and in 1840 a sum of £10,000 had been voted to provide, by means of grants in aid of voluntary sums, public walks throughout the country. Mr. Mark Philips, the progressive member of Parliament for Manchester, brought this grant to the notice of the Town Council,¹ and promised his assistance to help to secure "the advantage of some public walks or places of recreation for our overworked and underfed population."

A public meeting at which the Mayor presided was held, and a Public Parks Committee was set up. £32,000² was collected, to

¹ Minutes of Council, May 10, 1843.

² *Manchester Courier*, August 26, 1846.

which Sir Robert Peel, Mark Philips, Sir Benjamin Heywood, Lord Francis Egerton and Thomas Potter largely contributed, and £3,000 was received from the Government grant. Three properties were purchased and laid out, in Harpurhey, Bradford—both outside the municipal area—and in Salford. These were appropriately called Queen's Park, Philips Park and Peel Park. Two years later, 1845, the Public Parks Committee transferred the parks to the Corporation, and a Parks Committee of seven members was set up to manage them, and to let the refreshment houses, which had already been provided by the temporary committee. They were opened to the public in 1846. Peel Park was transferred to the Salford Corporation in 1851.

Until the Towns Improvement Clauses Act of 1847 there was no general power to enable Councils to spend the rates on parks, but Manchester had obtained such powers in 1844.¹ It seems to us now, looking back, that the Council was guilty of great lack of foresight over this question. When some members of the public first woke up to the situation, the only open space of any size near the centre of population was in Bradford, which was outside the municipal boundaries. It was clear that Manchester was growing fast, yet the Council did not take the precaution of buying up land on the outskirts for the future needs of the inhabitants. If it was then too late to save open spaces in Ancoats and Chorlton-on-Medlock, it would still have been possible to buy land in Hulme. Although the Council was prepared to take over the annual charge of the parks, purchased by voluntary contributions, it was apparently not ready until many years later to make use of its powers to incur any capital cost. In spite of the rapid growth of the city nothing more was done for twenty years.

In 1864, the year of the great distress in Lancashire from the cotton famine, the Government was prepared to lend money on very easy terms for works of public utility to be undertaken by local authorities. Manchester took advantage of this opportunity to borrow money for a park which was demanded by the ratepayers of Chorlton-on-Medlock and Hulme, by then almost entirely built up. Owing to the difficulty of finding a site that satisfied both townships, the matter hung fire for four years. At last, in 1868, sixty acres of land were purchased from the then Lord Egerton at

¹ 7 & 8 Vic., c. 40, s. 48.

the rate of £400¹ an acre, and Alexandra Park came into being. In the same year Ardwick Green, which had been taken over by the Corporation as far back as 1842, but continued as a private open space to which only subscribers had access, was opened to the public.

In 1876, on the motion of Councillor (later Sir) James Harwood, the Parks Committee was instructed "to report on the vacant plots of land or open spaces available within the city or suburbs, which it may appear desirable to acquire for recreation grounds," but nothing resulted from this hopeful beginning.

In 1884 the energetic Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association turned its attention to the need for playgrounds for school children. It also suggested that Birch Fields should be secured by the city. The Parks Committee replied with a defensive report. During the last few years, they said, the expenditure of the Council on sanitary reform had increased considerably; there was now the School Board Rate, and "regard must also be had to the fact that much of this money has to be provided by shopkeepers and small tradesmen, who have as much as they can do to bear their present burdens." As for themselves they had not been idle; they had managed to secure five small open spaces, they had planted trees and shrubs as an experiment in Piccadilly, All Saints and St. George's, Hulme. The smoke nuisance was so serious that tree planting was almost a failure, the price of land was so prohibitive that extensive purchases were impossible, but they would be glad to consider reasonable offers. Finally they said it was the duty of local boards to acquire open spaces in their areas, and Rusholme should deal with Birch Fields. However, better counsel prevailed, and on the eve of the amalgamation of Rusholme with Manchester, Birch Fields was acquired—Manchester paying the cost.

The next year some public-spirited citizens promised contributions towards the cost of acquiring Ardwick Polygon, an area of 12½ acres. The total cost was £30,000, and the Council would have had to find £20,000. Immediately the Ratepayers' Association objected, and "begged to solicit the Council that under the present circumstances, and pending the return of more prosperous

¹ That the landlord drove a good bargain with the Corporation can hardly be denied, seeing that fifty years later his successor received £400 an acre for land which now forms the Wilbraham Housing Estate.

times, it will refuse to entertain the purchase of such estate." This was decisive, and still the only open space in that area is Ardwick Green.

In the nineties the Booth Hall estate and Boggart Hole Clough, 145 acres, were bought for £10,000, and a part of the estate was laid out as a northern cemetery. A few small open spaces were acquired, some by gift and some by purchase. This was, however, a poor offset to the loss at the same time of the Trafford Park estate, which was offered to the Corporation by the owner, Sir Humphrey de Trafford, between 1893 and 1896. This estate of 1,180 acres, including Trafford Hall, the deer park of 700 acres, and an ornamental lake, was bounded by the newly-built Ship Canal for three miles of its length. Far-sighted members of the City Council, Alderman Thompson, Alderman Gibson and Councillor Needham—the chairman of the Parks Committee—were anxious to secure it for the city. The price asked was £350,000, but there was reason to think that the owner, who was anxious that the Corporation should buy it, would reduce the price. For three years the Council debated, appointed special committees and endorsed their recommendations not to buy, because of the distance from the city, because of the high price, because it was outside the city boundary, and because of the already heavy engagements of the City Council. Deputations of prominent ratepayers went to the Lord Mayor, and proposals to consult with Salford, Stretford and Eccles were considered but never materialized. Finally a definite offer from a London syndicate to buy the whole estate for £360,000 made an immediate decision necessary. The Committee felt that it could not commit the Council and summoned a special meeting of the Council, but the day before it met information was received that the syndicate's offer had been accepted. So a great opportunity of securing a magnificent park and of developing a trading estate was lost by the municipality. The success of the venture under the management of the Trafford Park Estate Company has proved that those members of the Council were right who predicted that the estate could be made to pay. If, too, the Council had acquired the estate it would probably have had little difficulty in including not only it but Stretford also within the city boundaries. No ratepayer to-day can but regret that the opportunity of securing such valuable rateable property was missed through lack of the ability

of the majority of the Council to look ahead a quarter of a century, a mere nothing in the life of a rapidly developing city.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Whitworth Park was given to the city by the trustees of Sir Joseph Whitworth, and Heaton Park, the largest of all the parks, approximately one square mile in area, and situated on the northern boundary of the city, was bought by the Corporation. The purchase of this estate from the Wilton family is the first instance of imaginative large-scale buying of park land by the Council. Unfortunately it is the only instance. Although when the park was first offered¹ the price was considered too high, a satisfactory bargain was struck five years later, and the park of 650 acres, with another 28 outside its walls, was acquired for £230,000 (£37 per acre). There seems to have been remarkable unanimity on the part, not only of the Council, but of the public for the purchase.² The fact that Manchester with its 411 acres of parks compared unfavourably with Liverpool (763), Leeds (881) and Glasgow (1,087) was at last realized. Also the failure to buy Trafford Park a few years before meant that this was the last obtainable park in the neighbourhood of the city.

Platt Fields, which adjoins the densely populated areas of Chorlton-on-Medlock and Hulme, was acquired as the result of a public meeting in 1907. Although the Ratepayers' Association again objected, "on account of the present high rates in the city," the Retail Traders' Association approved "on the understanding that some portion of the same is developed for revenue purposes." The Council this time, largely owing to the strenuous efforts of William Royle, a public-spirited citizen of Rusholme, disregarded the Ratepayers' Association and purchased the estate of 90 acres for £60,000.

After the war the necessity for parks and open spaces for all citizens, and not merely for those living in congested areas, was at last realized, and the interim town planning scheme for the south of Manchester specified certain areas as suitable for open spaces. Chorlton Park and Fog Lane Park were acquired to provide for the new population brought to that district by housing development and Wythenshawe Hall and Park, of 250 acres, the home of

¹ 1896.

² Mr. Hubert Phillips of the Manchester Sanitary Association did much to stir up public opinion on this question.

the Tatton family for six hundred years, was presented to the city in 1926.¹ It was then outside the civic boundaries, but was included in the city in 1930, with the whole of the area of the three parishes which now make up the Wythenshawe Ward.

The early conception of a park was ground laid out with ornamental beds, and walks with seats. The idea that games should be played, or that some part of a park should be left with its grass and trees untouched, was slow in developing. It is true that horizontal bars and swings for children had been provided in Queen's Park and Philips Park since 1859, but the first bowling green was not opened until 1871,² and tennis, football, cricket and golf made their appearance later still. The great development by which the parks cater for all sections of the populations, old and young, players and picnickers, lovers of gardening and experts in horticulture, dates from just before the war. This policy was actively pursued by the late superintendent, Mr. Pettigrew, and by Alderman Fox and Alderman Melland, two members of the Council who made the Parks Committee their chief concern. Particularly are the needs of those who cannot afford to pay any rent for playing fields catered for, although the pitches laid out and maintained by the Committee are sadly insufficient for the crowds of applications that come from the densely populated parts of the city.

The proper observance of Sunday in the parks is a question that has agitated the Council since 1856, and it is not yet settled. In that year a voluntary society provided bands to play in the parks on Sundays. But the Council received angry protests from Sunday schools and ministers of religion, and although Alderman Heywood presented a counter petition signed by 15,000 ratepayers a resolution requesting their withdrawal was passed by nine votes, the Council apparently being doubtful of its powers legally to exclude them. After this somewhat ungracious request the Chairman of the Bands Committee withdrew them under protest, and it was not until 1899, after band performances had been given in some of the parks regularly on weekdays, that they were allowed again on Sundays. Even then the bands were only allowed to play sacred music. Now there are band performances throughout the summer in most of the parks on Sundays, Saturdays, in Whit Week and on Bank Holidays.

¹ By Sir E. D. and Lady Simon.

² In Alexandra Park.

At intervals the question of allowing games on Sundays is raised and hotly debated. On every occasion the proposal has been defeated because the opponents—again chiefly ministers of religion and those interested in Sunday schools—have organized their forces, and those who want to play games on Sundays have failed to do so. It is difficult, therefore, to say whether any strong demand exists, although the tennis courts, bowling greens, etc., are so full on Saturdays that we should imagine that many of the players would like to play on Sundays, as do members of private clubs. The opening of the children's playgrounds on Sundays went through the Council unopposed,¹ and the use that is made of them on that day proves that, given the opportunity, it is taken. Yet presumably children are exactly those members of the general public for whom Sunday schools are provided.

With the growth of the Labour Party in the city, and the entry of Labour members to the Council, the question of holding Socialist meetings in the parks was hotly debated. Finally in 1896 the Council decided to make by-laws allowing meetings and demonstrations, on permission being granted by the Council. By one vote the Council forbade the Parks Committee to allow any meetings under any circumstances on a Sunday. This prohibition has now been withdrawn.

There are now 400 tennis courts, 79 bowling greens, 150 football grounds, 75 cricket pitches, 48 hockey grounds and 24 children's playgrounds with swings and other playing equipment. There is also a municipal golf course at Heaton Park, another projected at Wythenshawe, and 16 putting greens. Many of the pitches in the parks are used during school hours by those schools which have nothing but an asphalted playground of their own. This arrangement means that in the summer a hundred and sixty-five and in the winter a hundred and seven schools can arrange organized games three times a week. Football, cricket, rounders and netball are the favourite games.

Clubs formed by young people over school age are allowed to reserve pitches for their own use without any payment. Adults who form bowling clubs or tennis clubs can also reserve grounds upon payment of a small fee for the season.

It is now generally agreed that every town should have 10 per

cent of its area in the form of parks, playing fields and open spaces. For Manchester that should mean 2,725 acres. There are at present 2,465 acres, including 350 acres of playing fields in the Wythenshawe Ward not yet in use.¹ There is, therefore, a shortage of 260 acres. But Manchester's open spaces are not evenly distributed throughout the area. The inner ring, which contains 33 per cent of the population, has only 2·4 per cent of the open spaces, and the outer ring, Crumpsall, Blackley and Moston on the north, Gorton and Levenshulme on the east, and Withington, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Didsbury and Wythenshawe on the south, with 38 per cent of the population, enjoys 84 per cent of the open spaces. But that is not all. The population which lives in Hulme, Ancoats, Ardwick, Collyhurst, Miles Platting, has less than 4,000 acres to live on, whereas that which lives in the outer ring has 17,800 acres—four times as many.² It seems clear, therefore, that the extra 260 acres should be provided in the crowded inner ring, where individual gardens are impossible, and where re-housing is taking place in flats. The redevelopment of the city under the Town Planning Act gives an opportunity for turning some of the area from which the closely packed, verminous houses are cleared back into green spaces, which should never have been so recklessly destroyed. The high price of the land, £5,000 to £6,000 an acre, deters the Council from doing what every member knows it should do if Manchester is ever to be healthy and a beautiful city. Playgrounds for children, a quiet garden for the old folks, a place where bowls can be played without travelling to an already overcrowded green some distance away is not much to ask, but so far practically none of the land cleared of houses has been allocated for open spaces.

Much effort still has to be expended in making the best of a bad situation. Thanks to a voluntary society which provides the treats, and to the co-operation of the Parks, Education and Transport Committees, between ten and twelve thousand children spend a day in Heaton Park during the summer holidays. The children are those whose parents are unable to take them for a day's outing on their own to the parks.³ That there should be so many of these

¹ Manchester has not been so generously endowed by private gifts as some of its sister cities. It has only received 19 per cent of its total parks and open spaces by gift, whereas Birmingham has received 29 per cent and Sheffield 48 per cent.

² 1936 figures. ³ *Handbook of the Parks and Recreation Grounds, 1929*, p. 30.

children is the strongest argument for a bold policy of replanning of the city. Although the Housing Committee has made some provision for children in the Smedley Lane and Kirkmanshulme Flats, in Collyhurst, it is building about a thousand flats around the existing Willert Street recreation ground instead of providing more open space. This one of just over an acre is the only open space in the whole of the Collyhurst Ward, which has a population of 17,456¹ and an average density of 75 to the acre.

The policy of the Parks Committee of turning old churchyards, St. John's and All Saints, into open spaces with a children's playground in each, is admirable. The crowds of children who gather there is proof, if proof be needed, of the desperate lack of such places. The closing of some streets by the Watch Committee to make safe playing places for children, copied from Salford, is another palliative. It is not a really satisfactory solution. The residents in the closed streets have to put up with much noise and occasional broken windows, and the fact that they are ready to agree to the closing shows how much they appreciate the urgency of the problem. But it is not fair that failure on the part of the ratepayers generally to provide adequate and safe playgrounds for children should have to be made good by a minority of citizens, most of whom return after a strenuous day's work to homes where they have a right to expect peace and quiet.

The removal of the railings from the Piccadilly Gardens has proved such a success that it is to be hoped that the Parks Committee will soon remove the railings from all the parks and uproot the shrubberies which hide the green lawns and flower beds from the passers-by in the street.

TOWN PLANNING

The city of Manchester is the outstanding example of a city that has never been planned.² Its rapid growth in the nineteenth century was unregulated except that there were by-laws in some of the

¹ Medical Officer of Health's Report, 1936, p. 23.

² In 1837 a private venture in town planning was made in Rusholme, when the Victoria Park Company was formed. This residential estate, which is still managed by a trust, has become popular as a site for nursing homes, halls of residence, as well as for private houses. Richard Cobden lived here from 1845 to 1848.

townships regulating the width of main streets. The various extensions of the city and the exclusion from its boundaries of Salford have resulted in a long, unwieldy area, almost completely covered with buildings in the centre, and with practically all its open spaces in the intermediate and outer rings where the density of population is much less.

The power to plan an area, that is to determine the lines of its development by the local authority which does not own the land, dates back to the first Town Planning Act, 1909, but only un-built-on land could then be dealt with. Under that Act the Council made schemes for the rapidly developing south Manchester and, after the war, for the north of the city. A Regional Town Planning Committee which covers an area of 67,474 acres has its headquarters in Manchester, with Alderman W. T. Jackson as chairman.

The Town Planning Act of 1932 gave local authorities power, subject to compensation to owners, to replan built-up areas. Coming at the same time as the big drive for slum clearance, this means that for the first time in the hundred years Manchester has the power to retrieve the mistakes of her past, and can control her future development.

The 56,000 houses that were built before 1870, before, that is, the building by-laws of 1868, will all have to be demolished. If anyone thinks this proposal too drastic he should remember that Dr. Leigh in 1878 described them as such "that can never be brought up to the condition of those outside the ring, that the streets are narrow, the courts numerous, small and ill-ventilated, the houses generally old, out of repair and saturated with human exhalations." Reconditioning gave a new lease of life for nearly sixty years, and many of them are only now being closed. If the Housing Committee builds at the rate of three thousand new houses a year, this inner ring could be demolished in twenty years. By then the houses built after 1870, some of which will be nearly ninety years old, will be ripe for demolition. The Council has therefore a magnificent chance—which will not occur again for another hundred years—to bring back to the centre of the city grass and trees which vanished before the speculative builder more than a hundred years ago.

The new ring roads should be parkways like that at Wythenshawe

and all the roads should be replanned and reconstructed from the point of view of rapid and safe transport.

Of course the high price of land, £6,000 an acre in Hulme and £4,000 to £5,000 in Collyhurst, is the stumbling-block. But the price of land in the city is high because there is such a demand for industrial and commercial purposes—in other words, because the city is so rich. We are sometimes told that to acquire land for open spaces we must wait until the price falls, but the price will only fall because the city is becoming poorer, and then there will be protests from ratepayers who, with diminished incomes, will be asked to carry heavier burdens than the ratepayers of to-day. It is impossible for Manchester to sue in *forma pauperis* when the existence of the high prices for land in her centre is an index of her wealth. We are now planning the city for the next hundred years and building flats. Yet we contemplate throughout that time denying to the thousands of families the sight of grass and trees or of parks in which to play and rest, such as those who live a little farther out are able to enjoy. People live in flats in the centre rather than in cottages with gardens on the outskirts because they cannot afford heavy transport charges or the time involved in getting to and from work. But this is their—and their children's—misfortune, not their fault, and if we really want to give equal chances to all citizens we should at least see that the outlook of those families is not limited to bricks and mortar and high chimneys.

If Moscow¹ and Berlin² are prepared to spend money on making their cities beautiful, convenient and healthy, can Manchester afford to lag behind?

There could be no more fitting celebration of the centenary and nothing more likely to earn the gratitude of succeeding generations than a bold re-design of the face of Manchester.

¹ See *Moscow in the Making*, by E. D. Simon and others.

² *Manchester Guardian*, January 13, 1938.

CHAPTER IX

THE CARE OF THE DESTITUTE

IN 1838, as we have described on page 49, the care of the destitute in the township of Manchester was still in the hands of the Churchwardens and Overseers.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834,¹ which reorganized the administration of relief, was the result of a Royal Commission which had been appointed by the Parliament of 1832. The rise in the poor rates that followed the Napoleonic wars, and the revolutionary changes that were taking place in the structure of industry, had caused alarm. The Act set up a Board of Poor Law Commissioners of which Edwin Chadwick, a native of Manchester, was secretary.² The Commissioners were given power to make rules and regulations covering the granting of relief, and in order to spread the cost of relief over a wider area than the parish or township which had hitherto been the responsible authority, the Commissioners were to create new areas—Poor Law Unions—consisting of several parishes. Within these unions Guardians were to be elected to raise a rate and administer the poor law.

Although this Act was passed only one year before the Municipal Corporations Act, the qualification of the voters was different. The municipal franchise was intended to be enjoyed by any ratepayer who had occupied premises and paid rates for three years,³ but the Poor Law Guardians were elected on a system of plural voting based on property. The poor must be relieved but the rates must be kept down—the latter, rather than the former, was the spirit in which many Boards of Guardians, all members of the middle classes, approached their task.

Strenuous opposition to the introduction of the new Poor Law

¹ 4 & 5 William IV, c. 76.

² He had been a member of the Royal Commissions on Poor Laws and largely responsible for its report.

³ Owing to the practice of compounding, and the long period occupation, this resulted in the municipal electorate being smaller in Manchester than the Parliamentary on the £10 franchise. See Appendix I.

was offered in the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire, not by the working classes only. The Churchwardens and Overseers, who had hitherto administered poor relief, were, as in the township of Manchester, employers of labour who had themselves experienced bad times, bankruptcy, failures of the banks, and all the vicissitudes of business in the thirties. Although their misfortunes could not be compared with those of the operatives to whom a few weeks' unemployment meant starvation or the workhouse, they were in closer touch with the realities of the situation than were Poor Law Commissioners in London or Boards of Guardians in the agricultural south.

The administration of the Poor Laws by the Churchwardens and Overseers of Manchester cannot have been lavish, or they would not have received such praise from the visiting Commissioner. "The system of visitation at the abodes of the poor so indispensable to a right disposal of cases in large towns is brought to great perfection here; relief is never refused without visitation, and each visiting Overseer,¹ having a limited district, acquires an accurate knowledge of the conditions of the poor; it is part of his duty to be present at the board sitting for relief and to assist in regulating the amount. The cases of applicants for relief are carefully considered at the boards and disposed of, as it appeared to me, with discrimination and liberality."² Many of the applicants for relief were handloom weavers whose services since the introduction of machinery were becoming more and more redundant. The system followed in Manchester with regard to out-relief for the handloom weavers was to ascertain their actual earnings from the employers and then to make up the deficiency to 2s. per head for each member of the family. Widows with families and aged and infirm people were often given help to enable them to keep shops.

The workhouse, which housed the aged, the sick and the children, did not seem to the Commissioners to be economical, as the cost worked out at £13 3s. 3d. per head per annum. But, as a chaplain with a salary and a paid surgeon who looked after the inmates and also visited out of the house were employed, they realized that "the expenses of so complete an establishment are

¹ We should call him a Relieving Officer.

² Extracts from information ordered by H.M. Commissioners on the administration and operation of the Poor Laws, 1833, pp. 260-365.

necessarily heavy," and as "admission is rather a matter of favour little use can be made of the workhouse as an alternative to repel improper applications for relief."

In spite of this testimonial the Churchwardens and Overseers were not satisfied with the treatment of children in the workhouse, and it is interesting to see that all through its subsequent career when, under a Board of Guardians, it was famous throughout England for its strict administration of out-relief, the Manchester Union dealt more kindly with the children than did many other Boards.

From the report in January 1839¹ of a sub-committee appointed by the Manchester Churchwardens to inquire into the matter, it appeared that the education given to the 173 children in the poor-house was very defective. The master and mistress were selected from among the paupers, and their qualifications for the office were at most the ability to teach writing, reading and plain sewing. The children were in school for only four and a half hours each week, in addition to one hour spent in church. The sub-committee recommended the provision of a new and larger schoolroom, the lengthening of the school time, and the appointment of a competent master at a salary of from £50 to £70 per annum who, when not employed in the school, would be useful in the office of the governor in writing, book-keeping, etc.; the schoolmistress was still to be one of the paupers.

Manchester, too, dealt more generously with the problem of the Irish poor than did other towns. Workers from Ireland had been welcomed when the rapid demand for workers could not be satisfied from local sources, and later employers imported Irish labour to break strikes. When they had served their purpose, and when depression followed a boom, many of them, usually the poorest and most thriftless part of the town's inhabitants, would have starved but for poor relief. As they were not "settled" in the township Manchester could have refused this and applied to the justices for their removal. Owing to a more humane policy for which, as we saw on page 59, the Stipendiary Magistrate was at one time responsible, Manchester had made no distinction between Irish and English in giving relief, although from time to time she was criticized on the ground that her policy tended to attract the

¹ Manchester Churchwardens and Overseers Board Book, January 31, 1839.

Irish poor from the surrounding towns. In one week in 1827 the number of Irish cases compared to English cases in Manchester was one in seven, whilst in the surrounding towns of Oldham, Wigan, Preston, etc., it was only one in forty-four. By 1838 the number in Manchester had greatly increased.

Opposition to the new Poor Law by the Chartists and by mass meetings of the workers was supported by the Manchester Churchwardens and Overseers, partly because in those times of unrest and riots in the manufacturing districts they feared the result of a harsher administration of relief, and partly because, like all public bodies, they objected to being abolished. As we saw, the Churchwardens and Overseers went on from year to year arranging for their successors to be elected by the vestry and appointed by the justices, a happy group of men¹ of the same religion and politics, managing their affairs with no interference from Government and little from the magistrates. To have to submit to union with other parishes, to election, and above all to the strict control of the Poor Law Commissioners was not a pleasant prospect. They sent a deputation to the Government in 1834 asking for a clause to be inserted excluding Manchester from the Poor Law Bill, and although this was refused they stated afterwards that they had received assurances that it was never intended to apply the Act to Manchester, "it being known how efficiently the Poor Laws were managed there." In 1839, when the first tentative suggestion that the new system should be introduced had been made, they wrote to the Poor Law Commissioners expressing the hope that "the township of Manchester may be spared the calamity attendant upon the excitement which the agitation of the question might produce."²

Their next protest to Lord John Russell produced the reply that the new Poor Law was not to be introduced for the time being, and it was, in fact, postponed until the end of 1840. Meanwhile no serious difficulties had been encountered in the out-townships, and the Chorlton Board of Guardians, including Chorlton-on-Medlock, Ardwick, Hulme—all to be incorporated with the township of Manchester for municipal purposes the following year—and

¹ The large and beautiful Spode jug presented to the Churchwardens by one of their number in 1829 and now on show at Wythenshawe Hall shows that their meetings were not strictly confined to business.

² Churchwardens and Overseers Board Book, February 3, 1839.

thirteen others, was formed in 1837. For some years the proceedings of the Guardians were watched with jealousy and suspicion by those of the public who opposed the new regime, but gradually the opposition died down, and when the Manchester Churchwardens and Overseers also gave way the new system became generally accepted.

The table on page 320 shows the alterations that were made in the constitution of the various Poor Law Unions until in 1915 one Union for Manchester was achieved.

After two years, during which the township of Manchester was joined with twelve townships outside its area in one Poor Law Union, a return was made to the original boundaries in 1850. The out-townships—many of them rural—objected to the expenditure that Manchester considered necessary for the poor within her boundaries, and by mutual consent the uncomfortable union was dissolved, the out-townships being formed into the Prestwich Union.

One of the first subjects that engrossed the attention of the newly elected Board of Guardians for the Manchester Union was that of the children. In spite of the improvements introduced a few years before by their predecessors, they found 436 boys and girls in the workhouse, many of them living in adult wards and receiving about three hours' teaching a day in the three R's. There were also about 168 children boarded out whose only education was what they could get at Sunday schools, and there were many children belonging to widows who were receiving out-relief—because there was not enough accommodation in the workhouse—getting no education. A separate establishment for all these children under fifteen was proposed. Meanwhile the Chorlton Union had built a workhouse in the Stretford Road to hold 300 inmates, including children, who interspersed their hours of schooling with pin heading, except on those days when the Guardians met at the Workhouse, when the noise of the operation was too great.

Both Boards united to send a deputation to see the model Poor Law Schools for children at Norwood, and on their return recommended that similar provision should be made in Manchester. The building known as the Swinton Schools was the result. Concern for the children in their charge had been quickened by reading *Oliver Twist*, which appeared in 1838, and that the Boards were

STATEMENT SHOWING THE DATES OF THE FORMATION OF THE POOR LAW UNIONS IN THE MANCHESTER AREA AFTER THE PASSING OF THE POOR LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1834, WHICH ACT GAVE POWER TO THE POOR LAW COMMISSIONERS TO UNITE PARISHES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE POOR LAWS, SUCH UNITED PARISHES TO BE DECLINED UNIONS.

MANCHESTER UNION.

Constituted by Poor Law Amendment Act, 1841.

Township of Manchester	
Blackley	29
Bradford	29
Cheetham	29
Crumpsall	29
Failsworth	29
Harpurhey	29
Moston	29
Newton	29
Prestwich	29
Great Heaton	29
Little Heaton	29

PRESTWICH UNION.

By Order of Poor Law Commissioners dated 14th January, 1837, the following Townships were constituted the Chorlton Union.

Township or manor	Township of Chorlton-on-Medlock,
Blackley	22
Bradford	22
Cheetham	22
Crumpsall	22
Fallsworth	22
Harpurhey	22
Moston	22
Newton	22
Prestwich	22
Great Heaton	22
Little Heaton	22

CHORLTON UNION

By Order of Poor Law Commissioners dated 14th January, 1837, the following Townships were constituted the Chorlton Union.

Township or manor	Township of Chorlton-on-Medlock,
Blackley	22
Bradford	22
Cheetham	22
Crumpsall	22
Fallsworth	22
Harpurhey	22
Moston	22
Newton	22
Prestwich	22
Great Heaton	22
Little Heaton	22

Constituted by Order of Poor Law Board,
Township of Manchester constituted,

10th April, 1850, as a separate Poor Law Authority.	13th April, 1850.	
	Township of Blackley	••
	Bradford	••
	Cheetham	••
	Crumpsall	••
	Fairhurst	••
	Harpurhey	••
	Moston	••
	Newton	••
	Preswic	••
	Great Heaton	••
	Little Heaton	••
	Transferred from the former Manchester Union.	

Tombkin of Charlan

Township of Canonon-cum-Ashbury		—Added 1849	Detached
27	Openshaw	—	—
		1849	1849
		1849	1849
		1849	1849
		—	1849

Township of Beswick—Added 1858.

Township of Great Heaton—detached 1891
" Little Heaton— 1891 Township of Chorlton-upon-Medlock, (part of the Chorlton Union);—

Township of Clayton—Added 1894.

" Ardwick,

" Holme,

" Rusholme,

" Openshaw,

" West Gorton.

In 1896 the following Townships were consolidated to form the Township of North Manchester;—

Township of Blackley;

" Bradford,

" Cheetham,

" Crumpsall,

" Harpurhey,

" Moston,

" New ton,

" Beswick,

" Clayton.

The Prestwich Union, therefore, thus comprised the:—

Township of North Manchester,

" Prestwich, and

" Fallowthorpe.

In 1896 the following Townships were consolidated to form the Township of South Manchester (part of the Chorlton Union);—

The Union, therefore, thus comprised the following Townships;—

Township of South Manchester,

" Moss Side,

" Levenshulme

" Didsbury,

" Withington,

" Gorton,

" Burnage, and

" Chorlton-cum-Hardy.

In 1910 all the Townships in the Union were consolidated to form the Township of South Manchester for Poor Law purposes.

By an Order of the Ministry of Health made in 1915, the Township of Manchester was joined to the Township of South Manchester and the Prestwich Union, and together they constituted the Manchester Union. In 1930 Boards of Guardians were abolished and their work transferred to the City Council.

ready to spend £54,000 on a building which was in advance of any other provision made for pauper children at that time was largely due to the influence of Dickens, who had many admirers in the city that he criticized so freely.¹

Household Words of July 13, 1850, contains an article by him on these schools: "In some states of English existence Ruin is the road to Fortune. . . . In Manchester the high road to fortune is to be born a pauper; should especially orphanhood, either by death or desertion, ensue. The structure [of the Swinton Schools] is not only elegant but extensive: it is in the Tudor style of architecture, with a frontage of four hundred and fifty feet. . . . Two winding flights of steps in the centre lead to a handsome entrance hall, above which rise two lofty turrets to break the outline of the extensive roof. The depth of the edifice is great—its whole proportions massive. Pleasure gardens and playgrounds surround it. . . . The stranger gazing upon the splendid brick edifice with its surrounding territory is surprised when he is told that it is not the seat of an ancient dukedom but that it is a modern palace for pauper children. . . .

"To enliven the routine of school duties the master's cur takes part in them. He is a humorous dog, with an expressive countenance, and a significant wag of the tail. In the intervals of lessons, his duty—which is also his pleasure—consists in jumping over the benches or threading the labyrinths of little legs under them. Now he darts with wild glee into a spelling class; now he rushes among an alphabet group and snarls a playful 'r-r-r' as if to teach the true pronunciation of the canine letter; now he climbs up behind a seated urchin, puts his forepaws on the favourite's shoulders, and with a knowing look towards the master recommends his friend for promotion to a monitorship. It was surprising to find that the pupils took not the slightest notice of the antics of the master's dog. They heeded nothing but their lessons; but we learned that the dog was a part of the discipline. He accustomed the children to startling eccentricities and unexpected sounds; he presented a small, extraneous, but wholesome difficulty in the pursuit of knowledge. . . .

"The training of the juniors is conducted mainly *viva voce*; for the mass of them are under six years of age. The class was opened thus:

¹ As Cocktown in *Hard Times*.

“ ‘What day is this?’
“ ‘Monday.’
“ ‘What sort of a day is it?’
“ ‘Very fine.’
“ ‘Why is it a fine day?’
“ ‘Because the sun shines and it does not rain.’
“ ‘Is rain a bad thing, then?’
“ ‘No.’
“ ‘What is it useful for?’
“ ‘To make the flowers and the fruit grow.’
“ ‘Who sends rain and sunshine?’
“ ‘God.’
“ ‘What ought we to do in return for His goodness?’
“ ‘Praise Him?’
“ ‘Let us praise Him, then,’ added the master.

“ And the children, all together, repeated and then sang a part of the 149th Psalm. A lesson on morals succeeded. . . .

“ By this time some of the very young children showed symptoms of lassitude. One fat little mortal had fallen asleep; and this class was consequently marshalled for dismissal. . . .”

The children were occupied alternately in the workshops and in the schools—labouring for one afternoon and the next morning and then attending their classes in school for the next afternoon and morning. The girls from these schools were eagerly sought after as domestic servants, while the boys were apprenticed to various trades. Both boys and girls on leaving were furnished with two complete sets of clothes and their subsequent progress and conduct was periodically inquired into. The disadvantage, if it had one, the article concluded, was that it succeeded too well. It placed the position of the child pauper above the level of the industrious.

Only a few children were sent to these schools by the Chorlton Guardians who, when they bought the Withington site, housed their children in a block separate from the workhouse. In 1897 they moved them to the new Cottage Homes at Styal. In 1915 the Swinton schools were given up and all the children housed at Styal.

As part of the changes in 1929 these Styal Homes came under the care of the Education Committee. The numbers have decreased, not only because of the drop in the child population, but because of

a gradual change of policy. Not only have unemployment insurance and widows' pensions enabled families that formerly had to apply for out-relief to manage without it, but out-relief scales now enable recipients of public assistance to keep their children with them. For those children who are orphans, or for whom suitable homes cannot be provided, boarding-out is replacing institutional care, wherever possible. There are now only three hundred children in the cottage homes, and some part of the surplus accommodation is being used as a residential school for physically defective children.

Pressure of accommodation upon the old workhouse in New Bridge Street had necessitated the use of buildings in other parts of the Township. In 1850 an estate at Crumpsall was bought and a workhouse erected in 1855. An infirmary on the same site followed in 1878. Three years after the purchase of the Crumpsall estate by the Manchester Board, the Chorlton Guardians, also pressed for new accommodation, bought the site at Withington for a workhouse and infirmary. This purchase of twenty-four acres at £180 an acre was the cause of much criticism, and, as a result, the Chorlton-on-Medlock Ratepayers' Association sprang into being. Succeeding generations of ratepayers, however, have reason to thank the far-sighted Guardians eighty years ago who bought sufficient land for future developments before its price had increased. Five years after the infirmary had been opened, it had to be enlarged in order to prevent infectious diseases from being indiscriminately mingled with others in the wards. The new hospital—the result of much thought on the part of the Guardians and in face of the same short-sighted criticism from some ratepayers—was the first in the country to be built on the pavilion system.¹ This method ensured that different blocks of buildings, appropriated to different diseases, were separated from one another, and a space per patient of 1,350 cubic feet, double the minimum required by the Poor Law Board, and about treble that allowed in some of the large London poor law hospitals, was provided.

The first real test of the principles of the new Poor Law came in Lancashire, during the cotton famine in the 'sixties. The conditions under which out-relief could be given to able-bodied men, although modified since 1852 so that the workhouse test was not insisted

¹ Manchester Statistical Society: Account of the "Pavilion Hospital at Chorlton Union Workhouse," by Thomas Worthington, 1867.

upon, allowed only half the amount to be given in money, and the other half in kind, and insisted that the recipients were to be set to work under the Guardians.

The flood of unemployment in manufacturing towns like Blackburn and Preston made it impossible for the Guardians to keep to the regulations, and although they appealed in vain to the Poor Law Board to suspend the order, evasion was winked at by authority.

The distress, although not nearly so great in Manchester, by now more a commercial than a manufacturing centre, was considerable. Appeals were made there for a relaxation of conditions of out-relief, but as a contemporary remarked: "The Manchester Board of Guardians is distinguished by a resolute following of the letter and a faithful adherence to the principle of the Poor Law."¹ In spite of this rigidity, the Manchester Board was the first to give a more reasonable interpretation of "work" which had to be exacted in return for relief. It started sewing schools for women, and educational centres for men, where they were not only taught trades but ordinary school subjects. As, at that date, so few had attended school in their childhood, this was appreciated by many. "It sometimes caused a shade of melancholy to see an old, grey-haired man leaning over his desk and poring through a sum in Reduction and Practice, but even this was relieved by being told by a frank-spoken spinner in his own hearty manner while showing the sketches of geography and what he was reading, 'they could not give us work and so God put it into their hearts to give us the next best to it.'"² The Manchester Guardians were not so successful, however, with a farm on which one thousand men were employed, since the bailiff had to be assisted by the police.

The Relief Funds, one in London and one in Manchester,³ provided for a large number of those who were in need, and both funds worked on the principle of not supplementing out-relief, but of giving alternative aid.

The fundamental principle of poor law administration—that of making the position of people who applied for relief less eligible

¹ *The History of the Cotton Famine*, by A. Arnold, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

³ This was preceded by relief given by the Manchester, Salford and District Provident Society, whose organization of district committees in Manchester and Salford since 1833 formed the pattern for relief committees in the surrounding cotton towns.

than that of the independent working man, and yet of caring for them adequately—had broken down in the case of the children. Dickens realized that the pauper child in the Swinton Schools was better cared for than thousands of under-fed and badly housed children of Manchester whose parents were working. Its failure in the case of the sick was not so fully realized until much later. From 1846, as we saw,¹ the Government had made a grant in aid of the salaries of Poor Law medical officers, including a district medical officer and cost of medical appliances, but outbreaks of diphtheria, cholera and typhus in parts of the country between 1862 and 1865 led to overcrowding of Poor Law hospitals. The revelations made about the condition of many of these institutions led to a change of policy on the part of the Poor Law Board,² which was further developed when that body was merged with the Local Government Board (1871). Insistence was laid on the necessity for adequate care of the sick. Complaints made about the Manchester Workhouse Infirmary led to an inquiry by the inspector, who reported that more nurses were necessary and that there should be a changed attitude towards the treatment of sick paupers. Manchester, however, considerably behind the Chorlton Board in this respect, refused to comply, and did not build its infirmary at Crumpsall until 1878.

At one time the trained nurse in a workhouse was an unknown quantity, the paupers in the institution providing what sick nursing was required. As late as 1864, a consulting medical officer was recommending for the Withington Workhouse as an improvement, a staff which only worked out at one trained nurse for every 80 or 90 patients and an under-nurse for every 15 patients. The under-nurse was herself an inmate chosen as being "able-bodied and intelligent," but with no training and usually little aptitude for the task. Even in 1885 the nursing staff at Withington only consisted of twenty-one nurses, which meant that there was only one nurse for each ward for day and night, the other necessary assistance being obtained from the pauper inmates. Not until 1897 was an order made by the central authority prohibiting the pauper nursing of the sick.³ Even then the employment was

¹ See above, p. 137.

² *Poor Law History—The Last Hundred Years*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, vol. i, p. 317.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

permitted of pauper inmates as attendants in sick wards, under the supervision of trained nurses. The Nursing Order of 1913 was the next step forward, when inmates were forbidden to be actually employed in nursing the sick.

Following a Local Government Board circular drawing attention to the large increase in the amount of out-relief, the Manchester Board in 1875 adopted new by-laws for its own guidance, putting additional restrictions on the grant of outdoor relief. These by-laws were highly approved of by the Poor Law inspectors, who carried them from Board to Board, and when again in February 1878¹ the Local Government Board issued a "Memorandum relating to the Administration of Out-Relief" it referred to, and quoted, the rules devised by the Manchester Board of Guardians and since adopted by many other unions. These regulations seem to have had some effect in decreasing outdoor relief in the Manchester Union. In June 1874, the percentage of the population of the township in receipt of outdoor relief was 1.27, and in June 1875, when these regulations had been in operation for four months, the percentage had gone down to 0.87.² This reduction, as the Annual Report of the Local Government Board stated, was not achieved by increasing the number of indoor paupers. It was not claimed that the whole of the decrease had resulted from the operation of these regulations, but statistics showed that the decrease throughout the country in out-relief had been about one-fifth of the rate of decrease in the Manchester Union.

Severe unemployment at the beginning of the twentieth century was met in Manchester by the City Council's undertaking special work:³ roads, parks, etc., and by funds for relief of the unemployed collected by a Distress Committee, but the complete breakdown of the old principles of Poor Law relief was caused by the post-war slump from 1920 onwards. Until then it was rare for able-bodied paupers to be given out-relief, but the flood of unemployment swept away this policy. Thousands of men with dependants were given almost unconditional relief⁴ on scales that were relatively

¹ Fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1875-6.

² *Ibid.*

³ Under the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905.

⁴ The regulation that only half the amount of out-relief must be given in money and the rest in kind was not observed in Manchester, and the Ministry of Health took no steps to enforce it.

high. The machinery worked with difficulty under the strain. Although nominally three or four Guardians elected for the district were supposed to sit on the various sub-committees which dealt with applications for relief, often only one could be there for the whole time, and when the work was transferred to the City Council the position became more difficult as the councillors had other committees besides that of Public Assistance to attend. Their work was further increased in 1931, when the Government put upon them the work of administering, but not of providing the money for, transitional benefit on the Means Test. This was taken away again when the Unemployment Assistance Board was set up in 1934, and this Board has gradually assumed responsibility for the remaining section of able-bodied unemployed. The Public Assistance Committee still has the care of those families in sickness and the complete responsibility for non-able-bodied unemployed, namely those who are no longer eligible for work. The average number of people in receipt of out-relief in 1937 was 32,887.

The Council at first refused to take advantage of the power to co-opt outside people to help with this work, but later the experiment was tried. However, a much bigger experiment—that of appointing whole-time adjudicators to administer relief according to regulations issued by the committee—was begun in 1937¹ and the co-opted members were no longer necessary.

The break up of the Poor Law, advocated by Mrs. Sidney Webb in her Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law in 1910, was accomplished in 1929, when the same Act² that instituted derating of industry and the substitution of a block grant for many services hitherto aided by percentage grants, abolished the Boards of Guardians and handed their work over to county and county borough councils. This meant that the various classes of people formerly dealt with by the Guardians because of their destitution could now be handed over to the committees of the Council already dealing with the same classes of people who were not destitute. The care of the children in the Styal Homes came to the Education Committee, that of the sick in the Withington and Crumpsall Infirmarys to the Public Health Committee which

¹ It is too early to say how the new system will work, but it has reduced considerably the work of the members of the Public Assistance Committee.

² Local Government Act, 1929.

already administered the infectious diseases hospitals and the sanatoria for tuberculosis. A new committee of the Council, the Public Assistance Committee, was set up to administer the Casual Ward at Tame Street and out-relief. Time was allowed by the Act before all the changes should become operative, but Manchester broke up the Poor Law with resounding strokes. From the day that the workhouse infirmaries came over to the Public Health Committee, all cases of illness have been dealt with under the Public Health Regulations and not under those of the Poor Law.

The Public Health Committee also administers on behalf of the Public Assistance Committee the Poor Law Institutions at Crumpsall and Withington.

CHAPTER X

POLICE

THE chief reason, as we saw, for the establishment of the Borough Council was to have one body in control of the day and night police force over the whole area. The Council appointed a police force of three hundred and twenty men, but owing to the dispute about the charter,¹ the Police Commissioners would not disband their men. When Sir Charles Shaw arrived to take control for the Government, he found two rival bodies² fighting one another instead of guarding the public.

"I found that both Brown and Blue Police gave much attention to certain properties, taking positions for the whole night close to the houses of certain individuals, and I invariably found that the property most carefully, may I say exclusively watched, was that of Commissioners of Police or Local Authorities, thus forcing one to suspect that the much famed system of self government was in reality *selfish government*. . . . In addition to this the streets of the wealthy were much better watched and lighted than those inhabited by the poor." About the same time "a policeman on duty in Hulme saw two men fighting in a field opposite the end of Boundary Street. On closer inspection the combatants turned out to be the Chief of the Police Force of Chorlton-on-Medlock, and an Inspector of Nuisances for the same township."³

But never since the days of the notorious Joseph Nadin—Chief of the Police Force under the Court Leet in the early part of the nineteenth century—has a chief constable emulated his conduct. He bequeathed to his son—a lawyer—a wonderful collection of silver tankards which, rumour said, he took from the thieves before he let them go.⁴

In 1842, the police force was handed back to the Council, whose legal position was now established, and in 1849 the Fire Brigade,

¹ See above, p. 101.

² The police under the Constables of the Court Leet were also still in existence, but they were only day police.

³ *Manchester Guardian*, July 18, 1839.

⁴ Private information.

which had formerly only operated in the township of Manchester, was given powers over the whole borough.

During these early years, when bad times and the high price of bread caused unrest, strikes, Chartist demonstrations and occasional riots, the police were reinforced by special constables, and also by the military. The following account by Absalom Watkin, a leading business man and one of the first Borough Magistrates, of the strikes in 1842, gives a vivid picture of the responsibilities of the magistrates in those days.

"August 9th: A mob of about 5,000 persons came from Hyde and Ashton to Manchester, and turned out the people of several mills and workshops. The police and military were rather observers than anything else. The borough magistrates were not assembled. The Mayor¹ is in London. The boldness of the mob was increased by their apparent impunity. They attacked Birley's, and the Oxford Road Mills, and Stirling and Beckton's. Birley and Stirling and Beckton's resisted. Windows were broken and the doors injured, and it was not until the soldiers appeared and cleared the streets that the mob ceased their violence. I saw Mr. Kershaw, who at first was disinclined to act. Then I sent to Mr. Higson to say that I thought the magistrates ought to be called together. He answered that it should be done in the morning. Kershaw and Armitage went up to Cook's Mill at night.

"August 10th: Met the Mayor and magistrates at the Town Hall at 10. The Mayor had only arrived from London at 6, and was evidently fatigued. The outrages of the mob continue. Those who have been turned out joined with them, and shops have been plundered in the town, and money extorted. Message after message arrives for assistance. I am sent with Mr. Stuart and Mr. Higson to confer with Sir Charles Shaw. We found him at Kennedy's Mill (which is at work), with about 150 or 200 policemen, and nearly as many soldiers, taking, as he says, a military view of the matter, and concentrating his force to be ready to move where it may be urgently wanted: the usual patrols are withdrawn from the streets and all left exposed. He objects to scatter his force. We return. Colonel Wemyss objects to scatter the military and refuses to supply us with dragoons for patrol. In the meantime the gas-works are attacked, and the police stationed there are beaten. A

¹ Alderman Neild.

police station in the neighbourhood is pulled down. Mr. Callender goes with some dragoons and rifles, disperses the mob, and occupies the gas-works in force. While this was going on, the mob proceeded in different parts of the town to turn out the hands at mills and workshops, and in some cases to help themselves to bread, etc., from the shops."¹

The magistrates attended at the Town Hall day and night for about four weeks, and two or three of them slept at the York Street Hotel, next door, to be ready for emergencies. It was not until after the visit to London by the Mayor that the Government sent 1,500 cavalry. This reinforcement gave the magistrates the force necessary to support a proclamation making all meetings illegal for the time being.

A Commission of the Peace and a Court of Quarter Sessions were granted in 1839, and the first local Act, the Police Act of 1844,² determined that both the Clerk to the Justices and the Clerk to the Peace should be paid by salary instead of by fees, as had been the custom hitherto. The Justices settled the salary, but it was paid by the Council, as were all the expenses of the Police Courts. Fines were paid over to the City Treasurer and after the expenses were paid the balance went in relief of rates. This practice has continued ever since.

The salary of the Stipendiary Magistrate, which had previously been shared by Manchester and Salford, was now paid entirely by Manchester, and Mr. Maude became stipendiary for Manchester alone. The new borough owed much to him and to J. F. Foster, Chairman of the County Quarter Sessions, during the first few years, when the dispute about the validity of the charter was carried on in the Courts, and there was bitter rivalry between the new borough magistrates and many of the county Justices of the Peace. That the dispute left no lasting mark upon the legal side of the new borough's work was mainly due to these two men, who did their best, not only to deal out justice but to win public recognition and respect for the new Courts. This was not easy with a borough bench ignored by the majority of the county bench, and the county bench itself divided between those who, like Sir Thomas Potter and eight others, were both county and borough magistrates and were supporters of the Corporation,

¹ *Absalom Watkin: Extracts from his Journal*, p. 215.

² 7 & 8 Vic., c. 40.

and the remaining eighty-three, who were county Justices of the Peace and were mostly in sympathy with the anti-incorporators. Daniel Maude lived to see the Corporation firmly established; he continued as stipendiary until 1860.

A borough gaol was built in Hyde Road,¹ but although the Council had petitioned since 1842 for Assizes to be held at the New Bailey Court, as the nearest were at Liverpool, it was not until 1858 that this was granted. Manchester and Salford united to build Assize Courts and provide judges' lodgings, and the new Assize Courts were opened in 1864.² Two years later Strangeways Gaol replaced the New Bailey prison, Ducie Bridge, which had been built in 1790 according to the ideas of the prison reformer, John Howard, with separate cells for the prisoners.

Gradually a police force was built up which was capable of keeping order without the aid of the military. It is interesting to recall that when, in 1890, the War Office decided to remove the troops which were stationed at the Hulme Barracks, the City Council protested on the grounds that although difficulties very seldom arose in Manchester, "the very fact that a troop of cavalry could sweep any of our streets in a few minutes had certainly a wholesome influence."³ The venerable Alderman Heywood, who had been a member of the Council for forty-seven years, supported the War Office's proposal. He pointed out that cavalry had not been used in Manchester since 1848, when they had been called in to clear the streets of working men's demonstrations in favour of political representation. Since that had been granted he could see no further necessity for keeping the military in Manchester.

The next problem was that of the relations of the central Government to the locally controlled forces. Manchester, under her energetic Town Clerk, led the opposition to Lord Palmerston's attempt in 1854 to get some control over provincial police forces by offering a percentage grant in return for the right to inspect them, and to approve of the appointment of the Chief Constable. This was described as the "most unconstitutional interference with the power and privileges of municipal boroughs," and "subversive

¹ 1850.

² In 1868 the Manchester and Salford Courts of Record were amalgamated and the salaries of the judge and other officials were paid by the Borough of Manchester.

³ *Manchester City News*, March 8, 1890.

of the independence and right of local self-government."¹ Other boroughs supported Manchester, and the Bill was withdrawn. Two years later another Bill on the same lines was as strongly opposed, although Alderman Neild, Chairman of the Watch Committee, did not share the objection to inspection by the Government. This Bill passed, however, after alterations that Manchester wanted had been made, and she accepted the grant and inspection.

The first report² stated that the force consisted of 522 officers and constables, and "was composed of a remarkably fine and effective body of men, most of them in the prime of life and health." One of the many debts that Manchester owed to William Neild was his share, as chairman for many years of the Watch Committee, in one of the most difficult of all the early tasks of the Council, that of building up a satisfactory police force. The realization that only good pay and fair conditions of work would attract and keep the right men, caused the Watch Committee in 1861 to give each policeman one day's holiday every fortnight, and when this inducement proved insufficient a higher rate of pay was offered, as well as an annual week's holiday with pay.

During the 'nineties, the Manchester police force went through a difficult time, the echoes of which lasted long after the people concerned had been dismissed or retired.

An unsavoury scandal arose out of the close connection between a superintendent called Bannister and a man and woman who kept a disorderly house. He was accused of having shielded them from arrest until other members of the force took matters into their own hands and raided the house. The Watch Committee accepted the superintendent's resignation, but it was not until the magistrates had sent a resolution urging the withholding of his pension that that further step was taken. So great was the public agitation that the Council finally agreed to ask the Home Office to hold an inquiry, the report of which was published on July 20, 1897. It transpired that the source of the trouble dated from 1882, when, in opposition to the advice of the Chief Constable,³ the Watch Committee had promoted Bannister, who proved to be both unscrupulous and immoral, to be superintendent. Complaints about his conduct, his drinking and his immoral relations with a woman who kept a public-house in Hulme led to an inquiry by a sub-

¹ Council Minutes, January 2, 1861.

² 1857.

³ Malcolm Wood.

committee of the Watch Committee in 1893, three years before the scandal broke, and the sub-committee and the Chief Constable recommended that he should be asked to resign. Unfortunately the Watch Committee, by a majority, refused this solution, and decided that he should only be reprimanded. "A more lamentable miscarriage of justice can scarcely be conceived," said Mr. Dugdale, K.C., in his report. When the Watch Committee's Minutes came before the Council Sir John Harwood moved that the matter should be deferred for a month in order that the Council might have more information. However, Alderman Mark, who was then Chairman of the Committee, and as an ex-Lord Mayor carried great weight in the Council, had threatened to resign if the amendment, which he called a vote of censure on the Committee, were carried. This threat had the desired effect, and the amendment was defeated, which was an encouragement to Bannister.

Although the Chief Constable was exonerated from blame by the Home Office report, he obtained six months' leave of absence for ill-health, and never returned. Mr. Robert Peacock was appointed in his place.¹

A resolution moved in the Council that the whole Watch Committee should resign was defeated, members of the Committee themselves voting on it, but the following November, when Alderman Mark had resigned from the Council, a new committee was elected by ballot. Mr. Peacock had the task of clearing up this mess, and he also found "a deplorable state of things" existing in another division under a superintendent who had been seen drunk on duty, and who was frequently drinking in public-houses with his men. There was also a common practice in two of the divisions for inspectors to receive Christmas presents from brewery companies. An end was put to all this, but the new Chief's work was not made easier by the fact that on one occasion several magistrates turned up, as if by accident, and sat on the Bench when licensees whom they knew were being prosecuted. He made a report to the Watch Committee, and was cross-examined on it by the magistrates. The upshot was the resignation of the magistrates.

Although the late Councillor Ross Clyne gained considerable notoriety by making allegations against the police and the Watch Committee, these were proved on inquiry² by the Council to be

¹ 1898.

² Council Minutes, April 5, 1905.

groundless, and Sir Robert Peacock¹ had the satisfaction of passing on to his successor a thoroughly efficient force. Although the Watch Committee, and not the Chief Constable as under county councils, is the body to make appointments and promotions, it does so on the advice of the Chief Constable. It is inconceivable to-day that the Committee would promote any man against the Chief's advice.

It is a long time now since the functions of the police have been restricted merely to the maintenance of law and order. The arrest of vagrant or neglected children, who were then sent to industrial schools, had always been part of their work, and when Manchester obtained powers to prohibit street trading by children under twelve and to require boys and girls under sixteen engaged in street trading to be licensed, the police, instead of taking the children who broke the law before the magistrates, brought them and their parents before a sub-committee of the Watch Committee, where the cases could be dealt with in a much more informal way.

The change in the functions of the police is one of the most marked features of the last hundred years. One of the most striking signs of the change is their shepherding of school children across the streets, which now universal practice is said to have started in Manchester. Their participation in the administration of the various Children's Acts brought them in close touch with the activities of the Education Committee and with other branches of social work. But perhaps the war years had most to do with this change. Not only were there then many extraneous duties put upon the police which brought them into contact with members of the general public, but for the first time ordinary business men enrolled as special constables, working side by side with the police in their regular duties. Previously in Manchester special constables had only been enrolled in times of unrest to help to quell riots, now they were taking the place of policemen who had joined the forces. This day-to-day companionship not only brought the police into closer contact with ordinary members of the public, but they, in their turn, learnt something of the varied duties of the police, and were able to appreciate their qualities.

In 1881 the then Chief Constable, writing of the difficulty of attracting the right type of men to the force, said: "There is a

¹ He was knighted in 1919.

tedium and monotony inseparable from the life of a policeman from which other employments are exempt. . . . He is at the beck and call of everybody, and his temper is frequently severely tried by the remarks passed on him by the lower orders."¹ Few of the men in the present police force would recognize this as a true description of their life. Motor traffic, with its multitude of problems, ambulance work, modern methods of detection of crime, systems for linking up the force within the city area, and with other areas, and the work with children that we have already described, have brought variety and opportunity into the service.

The policeman of to-day is not only a better paid official—since 1929 salaries and conditions of service are settled nationally—but a more highly educated one. The recruit to the force has to pass an education test, then he goes to a police school for three months, then he has to pass another education test, and then if successful he is admitted to the force on probation for two years.

Manchester has not followed the lead of London and many other towns and included women as part of the police force. There are "policewomen" who carry out duties concerned with women prisoners, and who take statements from children in cases of indecent assault. But in spite of the untiring efforts of Alderman Annie Lee, the only women who has ever been a member of the Watch Committee, the policewomen are not "attested," and cannot take cases into court. Neither are they now employed on patrol, although at one time this duty was assigned to them. In view of the success of policewomen as part of the regular force in many other cities, it can only be a question of time before the male conservatism of the Watch Committee gives way to what is, after all, not such a very advanced proposal.

As the result of the labours of Alderman Lee, a woman police surgeon was appointed² in 1927. She examines women and children in all cases of alleged sexual offences, and gives evidence in the police court and, when necessary, at the Assizes. It is curious that the practice of having a woman as one of the police surgeons is not even yet more widespread.

A hundred years ago the police force was conceived purely as an instrument to keep order and to apprehend criminals. Keeping order at that time meant suppressing Chartist demonstrations,

¹ Council Minutes, April 3, 1861.

² Dr. Nesta Wells.

strikes and riots, which was the only way by which the working class could protest against wage cutting, unemployment, and the often bestial conditions under which they lived. The police were the allies of the employers, and we found this so much appreciated by Captain Jebb that he felt justified in excluding the names of small ratepayers from the petition against the municipal charter as he felt that they would naturally not be anxious for an efficient police force.¹

To-day the position is completely altered, and when we consider the variety of their functions we find it difficult to calculate whether the residents in Hulme or those in Didsbury benefit most from the existence of the force.

¹ See above, p. 90.

PART IV

CHAPTER XI

MARKETS

IN more primitive communities than ours markets played a most important and most necessary function. Here people could exchange their produce for the produce of others, and thus the markets formed the centre of the life of those who lived around them. To-day their place is largely taken by the shops, and their chief function is to act as a centre for the wholesale supply of goods to tradesmen—90 per cent of the trade in the Manchester markets is now wholesale trade—whereas a hundred years ago the housewife did most of her daily shopping there.

A market every Saturday, and a fair on the eve, feast and morrow of St. Matthew were granted to Manchester by the king in 1227, and primitive trading was carried on in the region near what is now known as Market Street. The manorial rights passed to the Gresley family, and later the De La Warre family held them until 1579, when the markets were mortgaged for £3,000. They passed in 1596 to Sir Nicholas Mosley, an alderman of the City of London, for £3,500, who became Lord of the Manor of Manchester.¹

Although there were certain defined markets, such as the Shambles, the Apple Market, Poultry Market, etc., any person could set up a stall in any part of the township so long as he paid toll to the Lord of the Manor. Most of the stalls were in the vicinity of an existing market, because the buyers congregated there.

So frequent were the privileges vested in the Lord of the Manor a source of litigation and disagreement between him and the town, particularly with respect to the control of the markets, that in 1808 a committee was appointed at a public meeting to take into consideration the question of purchasing the manorial rights. At that time the tolls and income arising from the property amounted to £2,500 per annum, and the sum of £90,000 was asked by Sir Oswald Mosley as the purchase price. The committee advocated its purchase, but the inhabitants of the town thought the price excessive and would not buy.

¹ He lived at Hough End Hall.

As soon as the Corporation was firmly established it began to think about acquiring the manorial rights from Sir Oswald Mosley. Its chief object was to deal with obstruction in the streets, which was every year becoming more and more intolerable. It was to the interest of the Lord of the Manor, himself living away from Manchester, to allow, or rather to encourage, traders to set up extra booths in the streets near the markets, as each booth meant an increase in tolls to him, but these increasing obstructions were of great inconvenience to the people and business men of Manchester.

Power to buy the manorial rights was given to the Council by the Manchester Police Act of 1844,¹ and the Corporation became the purchaser under an agreement entered into on June 24, 1845, for the sum of £200,000. They were conveyed to it by deed dated May 5, 1846, just two hundred and fifty years after their purchase by Nicholas Mosley.

Although the Council had been in existence eight years, and the Police Commissioners had been absorbed by it three years before, the old form of manorial government by the Court Leet for the election of Borough Reeve and Constables, and for the prosecution of certain nuisances continued until the Corporation purchased the manorial rights. The Borough Reeve's charities were then transferred to the Mayor, the Court Leet records passed into the care of the Corporation, and the method by which the citizens of the township of Manchester had been governed for over six hundred years was ended.

The receipts from the markets were stated to be £9,214, leaving a profit, when all expenses had been paid, of about £3,500 a year. By the terms of the purchase Sir Oswald and his descendants received a lump sum of £5,000 and an annual payment in liquidation of the capital of £4,000 a year, with interest at 3½ per cent on the outstanding debt. The payments finally ceased in 1894.

That the Corporation had made a good investment was proved by the fact that ten years after the transfer the receipts had increased from £9,200 to over £18,000. Money had to be spent on enlarging and improving the existing markets, and it was not until 1868 that the Committee was able to contribute from its profits to the relief of rates.

In 1846 the Corporation obtained a Markets Act conferring

¹ 7 & 8 Vic., c. 40, s. 31.

upon it enlarged powers for the better management of the markets. Provision was also made for altering the tolls and stallage.

An ambitious project to build a new large market between Deansgate and Cross Street had to be given up owing to the bad times which followed the failure of the potato crop in Ireland. Money had also to be spent on urgent repairs as, during the negotiations, the Lord of the Manor had allowed his property to deteriorate, so instead of a new market extensions were made to the Smithfield Market.

In the following thirty years the old markets were gradually discontinued and new ones opened. The Shambles and the Arcade Market at the corner of Deansgate and Bridge Street were sold, and when the wholesale meat market in Water Street was opened the pork and carcase market in Lower King Street was closed.¹ The ancient Smithy Door Market, which stood on the site of the present Victoria Hotel, was also closed. Of the other markets which exist to-day, Smithfield Market, now the largest, was originally built in 1822, covered over in 1854, and extended many times. A wholesale fish and game market adjoining it was opened in 1873. Knott Mill Market, on the old fairground at Campfield, was begun as a daily market in 1877. The stone building—the upper floor of which is the Coal Exchange—extending from the Market Place to Victoria Street, became a retail fish, flower, fruit and vegetable market.

Although in its progressive and comprehensive Police Act of 1844 the Council had taken powers to erect municipal abattoirs, it did not exercise them for more than twenty years, and contented itself with appointing inspectors of slaughter-houses and of meat. In 1869 the Medical Officer of Health reported so strongly on the insanitary state of the private slaughter-houses that the Markets Committee decided to refuse any further licences and to erect public abattoirs instead. In spite of protests from the Butchers' Guardian Association, the Committee persisted in their proposal, and in 1872 the abattoirs and wholesale meat market in Water Street were opened.²

To-day about 95 per cent of the animals slaughtered within the city boundaries for human food are killed at the municipal abattoirs, where they are inspected by qualified officers. The remaining 5 per

¹ 1875.

² Edinburgh and Middlesbrough already had public abattoirs.

cent are killed in the private slaughter-houses. This meat is also subject to inspection, but naturally it is much more inconvenient to examine carcases in scattered slaughter-houses than at a centralized depot.

In addition to the animals slaughtered in the city, carcases of animals slaughtered elsewhere are brought to the market, and it is found that the percentage of seizures of unwholesome meat in such cases is very much higher than in the case of animals killed within the city boundaries. This rather suggests that the inhabitants of Manchester are much better protected than many others in regard to this important item of their diet.

In addition to the ancient Acres Fair, many others had been held in Manchester, but in 1876 the Markets Committee reported that these fairs no longer served the purpose for which they were originally instituted, and that the establishment of weekly markets for the same purpose had made them unnecessary. As they tended to cause a nuisance in the neighbourhood, the Council applied to the Home Secretary for an Order¹ for the abolition of the fairs, and this was accordingly granted.

When the holding of fairs was discontinued, it was decided to cover the two plots of ground at the easterly and the westerly end of St. Matthew's Church, Deansgate, and to hold daily general markets there. In 1909 the Lower Market was leased to an exhibition company on the demolition of St. James's Hall in Oxford Street. This is now the City Exhibition Hall. The Upper Market, in addition to being used for miscellaneous market purposes, is occupied as a saleroom for imported fruit and vegetables brought via the Manchester Ship Canal to Manchester and to other ports.

During the 'seventies and 'eighties there was a period of trouble and anxiety for the Markets Committee. Numerous lawsuits challenged the exclusive right of the Corporation to hold markets, most of which, however, ended in a victory for the Corporation, but at the same time the Markets Committee was having difficulty with its tenants.

Under the Acts of 1846² and 1865 the Committee could either charge rent per square yard or tolls on each article sold. In the wholesale meat market tolls were charged. It was an easy matter to

¹ Under the Fairs Act of 1871.

² Manchester Markets Act, 1846, and Manchester Improvement Act, 1865.

count the number of carcases exposed for sale, but with fruit and vegetables it was more difficult. There was not so great a demand for the stalls as to enable the Committee to charge the maximum rent allowed by the Acts, and it seems to have secured what in its opinion represented the fair value of the privilege by charging tolls from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 2d. on each packet of fruit or vegetables in addition to rent, although this does not seem to have been intended by the Acts. Owing to the difficulty of determining what goods had been previously exposed for sale, it charged a toll every day on all the goods. It was alleged by the Smithfield tenants that there were cases of packages having to pay toll seven or eight times over. The year that the controversy started, 1878, the Markets Committee had paid £25,000 towards the relief of rates, an increase of £5,000 over the previous year, and the market tenants naturally seized upon this in support of their plea for lower charges.

The Markets Committee contended that Liverpool made higher charges than Manchester, and that as so many of the purchasers lived outside the city they contributed in this way to the rates. Members of the Council were divided over the policy of the Markets Committee, Alderman Harwood supporting the tenants, who formed a committee with a paid secretary and held numerous meetings to protest against "the Manchester Food Tax." The tenants said that if tolls were abolished they would willingly pay higher rents. For several years the controversy raged—in the Council and in the Press. At the municipal elections in November 1881 the tenants returned one of their number to the City Council, and in the elections two years later they managed to defeat a councillor who was hostile to their interests.

Even so the Markets Committee stuck to their guns and it was not until 1883 that the Council tried to put an end to the not very creditable struggle by deciding to seek powers in the next session of Parliament to enable the Committee to charge higher rents corresponding with the present value of the land, and to substitute as far as possible the principle of charging rent in place of tolls.

This decision to seek new statutory powers had barely been taken when an action was commenced by Henry Lawlor, on behalf of himself and the other market tenants, for an injunction restraining the Corporation from insisting upon the payment of tolls in addi-

tion to rent. In November 1883 Vice-Chancellor Bristow, giving judgment, decided that the Corporation was not entitled¹ to levy toll in addition to rent or stallage. The plaintiff was awarded the costs of the action, but fortunately for the Corporation was refused any compensation for the past.

Even when the Draft Provisional Order was submitted, there was further obstruction in the Council, and agreement was not reached until April 1884. Rent was to be charged in the place of tolls to the largest practicable extent. A maximum rent of 1s. per square yard per week was fixed, with a proviso that if, after one year's experience the sum payable from the markets in aid of the city rates exceeded £20,000, the scale of charges should be revised.² All distinction in charges between trades were abolished; the schedule of tolls was to apply to casual sales only, and in the case of disputes the market tenants were to have the right of appeal to the Markets Committee. This agreement conceded practically the whole of the demands of the market tenants. The recommendations were unanimously approved by the Council, and a Provisional Order was granted in August 1884.³

To-day there are vacant stalls both in the wholesale fruit and vegetable market and in the retail fish market. This is partly due to the movement of population from the centre of the city, and to the tendency for the producer of fruit and vegetables to by-pass markets and sell direct to the retail shops.

A retail market at the civic centre at Wythenshawe is a possibility for the future, when the population in that area has become

¹ Under the schedule of the Manchester Improvement Act, 1865, which had replaced the schedule authorized by the Markets Act of 1846.

² This proviso only applied to the first year's working of the new system. Since 1885 there has been no obligation to reduce rents or charges, however large the contribution to the rates.

³ In 1908 the Corporation obtained powers to increase the maximum of 1s. per square yard per week referred to in the 1884 Provisional Order to 1s. 6d., and again in 1924 it obtained powers to charge a maximum of 2s. 3d. per square yard per week, with certain increased powers regarding stallages. Although in these two cases the tenants strenuously opposed the desire of the Markets Committee to increase their powers, the negotiations were carried on in quite a harmonious manner.

Since these increased powers were obtained there have been five general revisions of rents of stalls in the Smithfield Markets, in addition to which, of course, individual rentals are considered on charges of tenancy. At the present time the rents of the stalls vary according to position, and some are charged at the maximum rent of 2s. 3d. per square yard per week.

large enough to support it, as well as the shops, which, unlike those in the centre of the city, also belong to the Corporation.

The purchase of the markets was paid for mainly out of the revenues, but for the first few years the balance came out of the general city fund. It had even been necessary to borrow money for the repair and reconstruction of the markets at first, and the payment of the purchase money was a heavy charge. However, the receipts increased from £9,000 in 1846 to £159,650 in 1937, and since 1868 the Committee have contributed over £1,000,000 to the rates.

At the beginning of the century the average yearly contribution was about £14,000, but when in 1906 Alderman McCabe was elected chairman he altered the policy. He felt that development of the markets was being sacrificed to the desire to make as large a contribution as possible to the relief of rates, and for the next few years the contribution was reduced to £1,500, the rest of the profits being spent upon the properties. A renewals fund was formed, and since that time the annual contribution has been the largest sum that the Committee could contribute, after making the necessary provision for renewals and development. In 1937 £23,500 went to the relief of rates.

The opening of the Ship Canal, by means of which Manchester became the third port of the country, combined with her position as an important railway centre, contributed to the rapid growth of the markets.

The first municipal cold air stores in this country was opened in Elm Street, adjacent to the city abattoirs and wholesale meat market in 1895. A second cold air store was opened in 1904 at Smithfield Market.

The markets to-day cover an area of twenty-seven acres and are valued at £1,200,000. The principal markets comprise the Smithfield wholesale and retail fruit, vegetable, flower, fish and poultry markets and the wholesale meat market adjoining the city abattoir. These markets are the largest of their kind in the provinces, and supplies are received from all the producing countries in the world. In addition there is the fruit auction saleroom at Campfield and the cattle market, which was opened at Mode Wheel in 1931 on the closing down of the Salford cattle market.

Markets have been the one form of municipal trading about

which there has never been any dispute. It has always been accepted that this essential service should be a monopoly, and that it should be owned by the citizens. The Markets Committee since the stormy times of fifty years back have managed their affairs quietly and efficiently, and so long as they produce a steady income in relief of rates can be sure of no interference from the Council.

CHAPTER XII

WATER

THE story of Manchester's water supply is the story of progress from the town's spring in Fountain Street to the huge undertakings of Thirlmere and Haweswater.

The earliest records of the town's water supply show that there was one principal spring or fountain, rising in the plot of land lying between what is now known as Fountain Street and Spring Gardens, off Market Street. Water was conveyed from here in stone pipes to the market-place. This spring was owned by the inhabitants and supplied them with water for over two hundred years, from 1506 to 1776, after which date the supply failed, owing to the sinking of other wells in the neighbourhood.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century the population was increasing rapidly. Mills, worked by water power, were being built on the banks of the rivers, which owners dammed up for their own use. Sir Oswald Mosley, the then Lord of the Manor of Manchester, constructed a pumping engine for raising water from the River Medlock at Holt Town, near Beswick, a short distance from the town. The water was conveyed to the Shudehill pits and the Infirmary pond, where it was stored, and from whence it was distributed by pipes to the lower parts of the town. As the amount that could be taken from the river was limited, many people had to get their supplies from wells.

It became obvious that a more abundant and a better supply of water was necessary, and in 1809 rival schemes were promoted in Parliament by private companies. These were vigorously opposed by the Police Commissioners and by crowded town's meetings, which enthusiastically adopted the report of a committee which advocated that the supply should be under the direction of the town's inhabitants. This proposal, however, was in advance of the times, and municipalization did not come for another forty years. The "Manchester and Salford Waterworks Company" succeeded in carrying its Bill and purchased the works belonging to the Lord of the Manor.

In 1844 the company was experiencing great difficulty in meeting all the demands occasioned by the rapid growth of the town, in spite of sinking new wells and of making extra reservoirs, and Mr. Bateman, at that time consulting engineer to the Waterworks Company, later to the Manchester Corporation, recommended that water should be obtained from the River Etherow and its draining area in the Longdendale Valley in Derbyshire. The Waterworks Company promoted a Bill in Parliament in 1844, and a rival, the South Lancashire Waterworks Company, promoted an alternative scheme. The new Town Council, however, was determined that the water supply should be in its own hands. It opposed the South Lancashire Waterworks Bill, and informed the Parliamentary Committee that it intended to apply for powers to buy out the Manchester and Salford Waterworks Company, to obtain additional supplies in the Longdendale Valley, and to levy a compulsory rate on householders.

A Government inquiry was held in Manchester¹ to inquire into the various schemes and the appalling state of Manchester's water supply was disclosed.

In the town there were then 46,577 houses, of which 23 per cent were supplied internally with water, but the supply was only for a short period each day. The number of houses supplied by taps in the streets, from which the water was fetched by the tenants, was 28 per cent, and the number totally unsupplied by the Company was about 49 per cent, which, at five and a half persons to a house, represented a population of 125,000 persons. To this must be added the cellar population of about 25,000, of whom 50 per cent were totally unsupplied with water.

This meant that about half the population of Manchester had no supply, except what they could get from pumps and carry to their houses. These pumps were not public, but had been put up by property owners, who charged their tenants about 1s. a quarter for access to them. Even so, most of the pumps were locked up during the greater part of the day. It is hardly surprising that many people got their only water from wells, polluted by cess-pools and graveyards, and from the filthy rivers. So scarce and valuable was the water that it was kept occasionally in cottages for weeks together and used over and over again for washing floors, until the smell

¹ January 1847.

produced by it was intolerable.¹ All the medical witnesses were agreed that the high mortality for which Manchester was then distinguished was due more to the lack of pure water than to any other single cause.

The Corporation sought power to make a compulsory rate for taking the water into every dwelling. It estimated that 10 million gallons a day was needed, and the Company was only able to provide 3 millions.

The Corporation's Bill for buying up the private Company and for bringing extra supplies from Longdendale received the Royal Assent on July 9, 1847. The chief feature of this Act was that it was the first time that a Corporation had been given powers to levy an unlimited rate—that is to say a rate to cover the whole cost of something which hitherto had been supplied by private enterprise on a profit-making basis. On the other hand, both the Domestic Water Rate levied upon the occupiers of property, and the Public Water Rate levied upon the owners, might not be greater than was necessary to cover the expenses.²

The Corporation, which paid £533,760 to the Manchester and Salford Waterworks Company, did not actually take over the works until January 1, 1851, in which year the new supply of water from Longdendale was introduced into the town.³ In 1855 the supply was over 8 million gallons a day.

In spite of extensions of the waterworks⁴ it soon became clear that Manchester had grossly underestimated her capacity to carry out Sir Joseph Heron's undertaking to bring a supply of water into every house. He said in 1847 that 10 million gallons a day was required, and it was not until 1855 that 8 millions were available. Meanwhile the population had grown, and also the needs of the

¹ "I have scarcely been able to bear the smell of the room produced by washing the floor with the water which had been kept several weeks to wash it over and over again, and I have a strong stomach" (Mr. Holland, Minutes of Evidence, Manchester Waterworks Bill, January 20, 1847).

² Manchester Waterworks Act, 1847, sec. iii.

³ The Longdendale waterworks scheme, initiated under the Waterworks Act of 1847, was carried out under the authority of that and subsequent Acts of 1848, 1863, 1865 and 1875. The works were commenced in August 1848, and continued until the completion of the reservoirs at Audenshaw in 1884, the several reservoirs being brought into use as they were finished. The scheme was estimated to afford a supply of 24½ million gallons of water per day in addition to the compensation water.

⁴ Between 1851 and 1861 half the gas profits went to help to pay for the water-works, see below, p. 362.

district. There was no difficulty in getting people to use the water—although there were still parts of the town in which there was only one tap for the whole street or court—the difficulty was in checking the use. Water closets were being installed, which added to the difficulties of the Corporation, both by increasing the demand for water and by accentuating the main drainage problem. As we saw,¹ there were no provisions for treating the sewage at this time or until many years later, and one of the reasons why Manchester stuck to the system of privy middens, and later to pail closets, when other towns had gone over to water carriage, was the insufficiency of the water supply. The Waterworks Committee, in order to check what they considered waste of water, wanted to charge extra for each water closet, but they found that they had no legal power to do so.² In 1858 they brought forward a bill giving powers to charge 10s. for each water closet in houses rated at less than £30. However, the newly formed Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, supported by twelve medical men in the town who were convinced of the injurious effect of the privy midden, took the matter up with vigour. They opposed this clause of the Corporation's Bill before the Parliamentary Committee, and called Edwin Chadwick and Robert Rawlinson as witnesses, who urged the necessity of water carriage on the grounds of health. Sir Joseph Heron, who prided himself, and with some cause, that the section of the 1844 Act³ insisting upon a separate privy and ashpit for every house had been strictly enforced, used all his powers to prove that that system was far better than one of water closets, and indeed, as worked in Manchester, the most sanitary that could be devised. The Sanitary Association, however, won and a charge of 4s. was allowed only for extra water closets.⁴

Baths, however, were considered a luxury for many more years, and an extra charge of 10s. for houses rated under £20 was enforced until 1935.

Still the demand increased as the population of South Lancashire grew. As the years went by, the other sources of supply near Manchester were secured by surrounding towns, and in 1868 Mr. Bateman reported to his Committee that the supply would only last

¹ See above, p. 173.

² Minutes of Waterworks Committee, October 19, 1854.

³ See above, p. 286.

⁴ This was abolished in 1935.

for another eight or nine years at the present rate, and that it was imperative that the question of extending the supply should be considered.

Faced with the large financial outlay that the new scheme would involve, the Committee procrastinated for about ten years. All this time the demand was still increasing, consumption had reached 21 million gallons a day, and although the Longdendale works had been extended, the maximum amount that could be supplied from that source was 25 million gallons a day.¹

In spite of all the efforts to keep the consumption in check, people were washing more freely, introducing water closets and baths, and in the suburbs using water for stables and gardens, and still water had not been brought into every house. In 1876, out of 70,366 houses, 14,000 were without an internal supply of water, and there were only about 20,000 houses with baths in the whole city.

Mr. Bateman, who was also consulting engineer to the Liverpool Corporation, had proposed that the two towns should have a joint supply from the Lake District²—Ullswater and Haweswater, which would supply 40 million gallons a day to each city. But the size of this scheme frightened some of the members of the Waterworks Committee, and before Manchester could make up her mind to act, Liverpool decided to have her own supply.³ Manchester, left to solve the problem alone, now realized that the Lake District was the only possible source of supply; Haweswater, Ullswater, Thirlmere were all equally suitable from the point of view of the experts. Thirlmere was finally chosen, and Bateman intimated that between 40 and 50 million gallons a day could be obtained from it. In 1877 the plans were prepared.

Opposition from the owner of the estate ended with his death, but that from the Thirlmere Defence Association, which was afraid that the beauties of the Lake District would be spoiled, had to be met in Parliament. The ratepayers, in spite of the opposition of two members of the City Council, steadfastly supported the proposal both at town's meetings and at a subsequent poll, and in 1879 the Bill was passed.

The Thirlmere Aqueduct to Prestwich is 96 miles in length. It

¹ Letter to Town Clerk from Mr. Bateman, May 22, 1875.

² 1873.

³ From Wales.

supplies about 55 million gallons per day, or 40 million gallons per day in dry weather, and of this, compensation water amounting to 4½ million gallons per day is sent down the St. John's Beck. Water was delivered through the first pipe to Manchester in 1894. The works were opened on October 12th at Thirlmere by Alderman Sir John Harwood, who was then the Chairman of the Waterworks Committee, and who had devoted much time and energy to carrying through the scheme since its inception, nearly twenty years previously. Speaking of the allegations made by those who opposed the scheme that it would destroy the beauty of the lake, he said: "Do you think the popularity of the district will be lost because the superfluous water from the lake which formerly flowed to the north and went to join the ocean now goes to the south to quench the thirst and invigorate the frames of tired men and women in the mills and workshops of Lancashire and Cheshire?"¹

By 1900 the consumption of water had risen to nearly 32 million gallons per day, the increase during the previous ten years having been at the rate of over one million gallons per day per annum. As the consumption increased, additional pipes were laid from Thirlmere, the second in 1904, the third in 1915, and the fourth in 1927.

In 1918 the Waterworks Committee reported that the demand for water was fast approaching the quantity available from the two existing sources, Longdendale (20 million gallons) and Thirlmere (40 million gallons). The consumption then reached a little over 51 million gallons per day and it was estimated that by 1932 the average daily consumption would reach 65,125,000 and the resources would be exhausted. Attention was therefore again turned to Haweswater, where eventually an additional supply of about 72 million gallons a day could be secured. The Committee felt that this should meet the needs of Manchester and district for another sixty or seventy years. The Council approved the promotion of a Bill in the next session of Parliament to empower the Corporation to acquire lands and construct waterworks at Haweswater, and the necessary powers were granted on December 23, 1919.

Haweswater is about 80 miles from Manchester and lies in a

¹ The question of the amenities is not yet solved. Some Lake District lovers hold that the Corporation might make greater efforts to maintain them.

comparatively unfamiliar part of the Lake District. It has now a water surface of 346 acres, but when the water level is raised 95 feet by the intended dam across Haweswater Beck, it will have a water surface of nearly 1,000 acres. The aqueduct to the reservoir at Heaton Park will be approximately 73 miles in length.

Since the Haweswater scheme was first settled the situation has developed very differently from what was then anticipated. At the rate at which the consumption of water had increased up to 1919, the Council was certainly justified in assuming that the increase would continue. The population was increasing, and the post-war slump, that has fundamentally affected the cotton trade, was not yet in sight.

The demand for water consists mainly of two factors, domestic consumption and trade requirements. Together these had increased the demand, since the beginning of the twentieth century, at the rate of over a million gallons a day every ten years, but a different state of affairs set in after 1928, which was a peak year. In that year the average daily consumption was 57,353,000 gallons¹ and by 1932 it had fallen—instead of still increasing—to 54,719,000.

The following table shows the consumption since 1929 calculated by the year, not by the day.

ANNUAL CONSUMPTION.

(Million Gallons)

		Domestic	Trade, etc.	Bulk	Total
1929-30	...	10,260	6,518	2,904	19,682
1930-31	...	10,592	6,333	2,920	19,845
1931-32	...	10,753	6,445	2,829	20,027
1932-33	...	10,471	6,633	2,903	20,007
1933-34	...	10,484	6,769	3,075	20,328
1934-35	...	9,183	6,168	2,903	18,254
1935-36	...	10,542	7,054	3,046	20,642
1936-37	...	10,721	7,419	3,113	21,253

This shows that the trade demand is on an upward trend, but the slight increase in the domestic demand is difficult to understand as 13,718 new houses, all fitted with baths, have been built in the last eight years.

The Waterworks Committee seems to find difficulty in making

¹ About 15 per cent of the consumption relates to bulk supplies.

any satisfactory basis of calculation as to future needs and does not like to commit itself more than three years ahead. It naturally wants to be well on the safe side. That the future population, not only of Manchester, but of the area served by Manchester, will fall with a fall in the whole population of the British Isles is probably a safe assumption—the only question is whether it will fall at a faster or at a slower rate.

Meanwhile the work at Haweswater, which did not begin until 1929, was held up during the financial depression of 1931, except for the making of the tunnels. In 1934 the Waterworks Committee decided to carry out the next step, namely, the construction of the dam to raise the level of the lake. It based this decision on the fact that the demand for water had increased since 1931, but it did not propose at this stage to raise the dam to the full height originally suggested, which would be necessary if the full capacity was to be secured. Later in the year, however, while this work was proceeding there was a drought, and some of the water that flowed from the taps of Manchester consumers contained peaty matter which, although perfectly harmless, caused unpleasant letters and complaints to the Department. No suggestion to filter the water was made, and the Waterworks Committee had no difficulty in persuading the Council to continue with the full scheme, the work on which is now proceeding.

The area served wholly by the Manchester Waterworks is about $128\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, the estimated population supplied in detail being $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions.¹ Twenty million gallons a day come from Longdendale, 40 million from Thirlmere, and when Haweswater is completed about 72 million gallons will come from there—a total of 132 million gallons a day of potential supply, and our present consumption is under 59 million gallons.

There may be some poetic, even if no financial, justice in the thought that whereas Manchester was definitely short of water for so long, and suffered in health from the consequent bad sanitary arrangements, she will soon have far more water than she is ever likely to need. There is always the possibility of other areas wanting some of the surplus supply, and that will help to meet the cost of the new works. We cannot feel, however, that the history of the Haweswater scheme is an example of far-sighted planning at its best.

¹ *The City of Manchester, 1937*, p. 55.

CHAPTER XIII

GAS

THE early history of the gas undertaking of Manchester is a romance of municipal enterprise.

Mr. William Murdoch introduced gas as an illuminant to the cotton mills of Messrs. Philips and Lee in Cross Street, Salford, in 1805. This experiment was a great success as the annual cost was only £600, whereas lighting with oil had cost £2,000. Two years later the Police and Improvement Commissioners, to whom was entrusted the duty of lighting the streets of Manchester, bought a small plant and fixed a single gas lamp over the door of their police office.¹ A great sensation was created in the town, and night after night crowds of people gathered outside the offices to gaze at it. Soon the whole of their premises were lit in this way, and they also extended it to the street lamps in some of the busiest parts of the town.

Meanwhile, the big mill-owners were installing their own plants, and as the advantage of gas over oil lamps and candles was realized, the public, in 1817, demanded that the Police Commissioners should extend their works and supply private people.

The Commissioners evidently assumed that as the Act of 1792² and the earlier one of 1765 had given them power to light the streets so it also gave them the power to manufacture the light. Nobody, at that date, was considering the pros and cons of municipal as opposed to private enterprise. In 1812 the London Gas Light and Coke Company had been founded, but London was far from Manchester, and no company had appeared in that city to comply with the public demand.

In 1817, therefore, after a public meeting at which a resolution had been unanimously passed authorizing the increase of the Police Rate from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d., gas-works were set up on a plot of land, now known as the site of the Albert Street Police Station.³

¹ In Police Street, at the bottom of King Street.

² See above, p. 52.

³ Gas Street, leading off Albert Street, still commemorates these works.

The cost of laying mains and the gradual substitution of gas lamps for oil lamps was greater than could be borne by the increased rate which, by law, was limited to 1s. 6d. The Commissioners, therefore, supplied shops and other consumers at a price of 14s. per 1,000 cubic feet, which brought in a substantial profit, £20,000 in seven years. The debt of the gas-works was thus reduced by half.¹ It is not quite clear what actually happened to this profit. According to one authority, it was set against the original cost of the works, but according to Alderman John Shuttleworth,² £15,000 to £17,000 was paid towards the erection of the Town Hall in King Street.

Meanwhile, the original technical difficulties which had hampered the early use of gas had been overcome and a wide extension of gas lighting took place throughout the country. Private joint stock companies were formed at Leeds, Liverpool, Brighton, Edinburgh, etc., and so rapidly had private enterprise captured this field that when, in 1819, the inhabitants of Derby met to consider a gas supply, it was assumed that the only way of getting it would be to form a joint stock company.

In 1823 private enterprise woke up in Manchester under the magnificent name of the "Manchester Imperial Joint Stock Oil and Gas Company." Its promoters intended to apply to Parliament for an Act which should authorize them to "light with oil and other gas the town and parish of Manchester." At the same time, and probably not unconnected with this move, the Commissioners were threatened with litigation, on the grounds that they had no statutory authority to use the funds of the Police Rate for the manufacture of gas. Criticism was also directed to the high price at which they sold the gas. They decided, therefore, to apply to Parliament for powers which they had exercised unchallenged for seven years and at the same time to oppose the Joint Stock Company's Bill. Public opinion was on their side, for although there was no discussion of the advantages or disadvantages of municipal as opposed to private enterprise, there was a feeling that Manchester was well served and that "strangers"—for the promoters were mostly not Manchester men—wanted to come in and take the profits.

Parliament, however, would have wanted reasons not feelings,

¹ To £20,788 in June 1824. *Municipal Code*, 1896, vol. iii, pp. 357-400.

² "Some Account of the Manchester Gas Works," Statistical Section of the British Association, 1861.

and the company was promising a cheaper supply. But, like so many other causes in these days, it was wrecked because the promoters were not too particular about their methods. When it was proved that many of the signatures attached to the petition of the gas company were forged or fictitious, the committee of the House of Commons threw out the Joint Stock Bill, and speedily passed that of the Police Commissioners.¹

This Act laid the foundation of municipal trading, not only in Manchester but in the whole country, for it was the first time that Parliament had sanctioned the use of rates for trading purposes.² Under it, Manchester also got the power to supply the out-townships. Profits from the undertaking were to be applied in relief of the Police Rate of the township of Manchester.

Thirty of the Commissioners were elected as Gas Directors. At this time the method of election of Commissioners that we have described on page 53 had not come into force, and any man who was rated at £30 a year was entitled to act as Police Commissioner if he wished. This opportunity was not lost by the frustrated supporters of the Joint Stock Company and other critics of the Commissioners, and meetings of over nine hundred people, in which no semblance of order could be kept, were held in the next few years, when angry discussions on the price of gas and the conduct of the undertaking made efficient business management impossible.

A controversy continued for some years between the shopkeepers, who were the chief consumers of gas and who naturally wanted it as cheaply as possible, and the business men, mostly mill-owners, who made their own gas and who were glad that profits from the gas undertaking should go towards improvements and relief of rates. At that time gas was not used in warehouses, offices and dwelling-houses. "The small trader, whose shop, situated in some dark, narrow street, required much artificial light, complained that the enormous warehouses of the Bridgewater Trust, and the great factories of the Birleys, the M'Connells, the Murrays, and the Houldsworths, paid nothing towards the supply

¹ 5 Geo. IV, c. 133.

² In 1822, Chorlton in its first Act setting up Police Commissioners obtained the power to manufacture gas and appropriate half the profits to improvements, but it was never exercised.

of the town's lamps with gas, while the whole of that cost was defrayed out of the profits derived from excessively high prices paid,"¹ the gas at that time being 14s. per 1,000 cubic feet. The question became a political one; the taxed shopkeeper who wanted a reduction of the burden was the Radical, and the untaxed warehouseman, who thought the gas consumers paid only a reasonable price for their light and who opposed fiercely any reduction in the charge, was the Conservative.

The fact that there was still no statutory authority for using the profits for improvements put the Commissioners in a difficulty, and in 1828, after more stormy meetings, during which several of the Commissioners engaged in personal combats, an Act² was secured which not only gave statutory authority for defraying the cost of improvements out of the gas profits, but altered the constitution of the Commissioners.³

In future the Gas Directors were to be elected by the body of Commissioners, themselves elected by the public. Although this arrangement made the conduct of the gas undertaking much easier, the controversy whether the gas consumer should pay more than cost price in order to save the pockets of the ratepayers as a whole continued. It was not finally settled until 1921. In 1828, unlike to-day, gas consumers were only a small percentage of the ratepayers. The shopkeepers and publicans, who objected also to compulsory purchase of property for improvements, demanded a reduction in the price of gas. It was alleged that the Improvement Committee "sat in a comfortable room at the Town Hall, determining what part of a man's property they would take and then one of them said, 'Oh, how shall we get the money for these improvements?' Another would say, 'We are eighteen of us also on the Gas Committee; we are sure to have a majority' and they had just to step into another room and then decide how much the consumers should pay for their gas in order to raise the money for carrying these cursed improvements into effect."⁴

Meanwhile, the demand for gas was fast increasing. The Rochdale Road works were built in 1824, a third works, on the place where Oxford Road Station now stands, a few years later, and a fourth

¹ *English Local Government. Statutory Authorities*, by S. and B. Webb, p. 266.

² 9 Geo. IV, c. 117.

³ See above, p. 52.

⁴ *English Local Government. Statutory Authorities*, by S. and B. Webb, p. 272.

in Every Street in 1831. The price of gas was reduced from 14s. to 12s. in 1828, and again reduced to 10s. 6d. in 1831. Arrangements were also made to supply Chorlton-on-Medlock,¹ Hulme² and Ardwick³ with gas, but owing to a dispute about the price, Chorlton-on-Medlock contracted with the only private company that ever existed in Manchester⁴ for four years. At the end of this period, Mr. Fernley, the owner, was unable any longer to compete against the municipal supply and he sold out to the Commissioners. From 1837 Chorlton received its gas from Manchester. In the same year the Commissioners also arranged to supply the township of Newton Heath.

To the difficulties of this early trading were added the increasing doubts of some of the Conservative Commissioners that perhaps, after all, gas was a field for private enterprise. Two leading Conservatives, Mr. Hugh Hornby Birley⁵ and Mr. Braidley,⁶ proposed that the gas-works should be sold. Fortunately, an amendment moved by William Neild, one of the founders of the Town Council, and seconded by Joseph Adshead, one of the first councillors, was carried. This expressed approval of the past management and declared the desirability of maintaining the works, both because it was the best way of ensuring a good supply at a reasonable price, and because it created a fund for public improvements so especially necessary in a town like Manchester.

Mr. Thomas Wroe was appointed chief official, both of the gas-works and of the Commissioners. He kept these posts for ten years and retired when, after the fight for the charter had ended in victory, the gas-works as well as the other duties of the Police Commissioners were handed over to the Council.⁷ Owing to his excellent management the price of gas was reduced. During the ten years it dropped from 10s. 6d. to 5s. 9d., which was lower than the price charged by private companies in Liverpool, and the profits increased from £10,200 to £31,700 a year. Many of the mill-owners, who had formerly made their own gas, and the new ones who were coming to Manchester now purchased from the town. Since 1828, £370,000 from profits had been used for paying for improvements.

¹ 1822.

² 1831.

³ 1831.

⁴ The Provincial Portable Gas Co. of London had bought land in Hulme in 1825 and erected gas-works. They sold gas in containers, so did not need mains. The works were not very successful, and were sold to a Mr. Fernley in 1831.

⁵ See above, p. 32.

⁶ See above, pp. 29, 30.

⁷ In 1843.

The Commissioners, appointed by the Government to inquire into the state of large towns,¹ examined Mr. Wroe on the relative advantages of municipal and joint stock management. He admitted none in favour of the latter, and added that if the interior pipes and fittings could also be done under one contract, it would be 10 per cent cheaper, and the work would be better, "but what is to become of the seventy master tradesmen employed now in supplying gas fittings?"² Later the Gas Committee took powers to extend municipal trading in this way.

At that time there was no other large town and only a few small ones who had a municipal supply of gas. The enterprise of these early Commissioners had been well justified. If, however, it had not been for William Neild in 1834, Manchester might have lost all that they had built up. Since then there has never been a suggestion that the gas-works should be sold to private enterprise, and the most die-hard Conservative is usually surprised when he hears the gas undertaking spoken of as "municipal Socialism." An inquiry carried out by American investigators in 1907 into the operation of public utilities in Europe, says, "It is worthy of special notice that the one undertaking that comes in for practically no criticism at the hands of the engineers is Manchester—the only one which has been public from the start. . . ."³

The success with which money could be raised for improvements by making a profit on the sale of gas which, in those towns in which a private company operated, went to the shareholder, led the Corporation to turn to this undertaking when in financial trouble.

In 1850 it was realized that the new Longdendale water scheme, for which the Council had obtained Parliamentary sanction, was going to be a big strain on the finances of the Corporation. Accordingly it was decided to seek power to divert for the next ten years half the gas profits—such was the prosperous condition of its finances—from the carrying out of improvements within the town towards the expenses of the waterworks scheme and in reduction of the Water Rate. Power to do so was obtained in the General Improvement Act of 1851, and from 1851 to 1861 the profits paid to the Waterworks Department amounted to £166,264.

¹ 1844.

² Appendix to First Report, 1844, p. 174.

³ *National Civic Federation Report*, 1907, Part I, vol. i, p. 185.

But the consumer had at last to be reckoned with, and a revolt was organized in 1859 when a Gas Consumers' Association was formed. This demanded a reduction in the price of gas instead of profits being divided between improvements and the Water Rate, and that consumers should be allowed to hire gas meters instead of having to purchase them. The agitation was directed against Alderman Shuttleworth, the Chairman of the Gas Committee, who had been a member of it for nineteen years. A resolution reducing the price of gas to 4s. 6d. was carried by the Council in spite of his opposition, and the following November he was not re-elected as alderman. He was also turned off the Gas Committee. The proposal to continue giving gas profits in aid of the waterworks was defeated, and a system of hiring meters was adopted. The only demand which was not conceded was that profits should no longer go to improvements.

The Gas Committee, in pursuance of its policy of extending the area of supply, bought out small works whenever possible, and in 1869 took over the Droylesden works so that it could supply gas to that township. Consumption was still increasing and new works were now needed. After six years of acrimonious and often frivolous discussion, and much referring back of the Committee's proposals, the Bradford Road works were erected.¹

Each extension of the city brought an increase of consumption and this meant extension of the works. There now occurred also a period of rapid technical improvements, so that more efficient production from coal and a development of by-products to include aniline dyes, liquid ammonia and chloride sulphate, as well as coke, increased the profits from by-products.

The invention of the incandescent mantle, which gave eight times the light of the open flame, and the Bunsen burner made possible the use of gas for cooking and heating. In 1884 the Gas Committee began to hire cooking stoves and gas fires to consumers, but it was not until 1903, when these were supplied and fixed free of charge,² that the demand increased rapidly. The follow-

¹ Some of the opposition to the new works was the proposed site near Philips park, one of the lungs of the city. Barton was considered—later to be the site of the Electricity Works, but the fact that the Committee had actually bought the Bradford Road site, although it infuriated the opposition, won the day.

² At that time Manchester and St. Helens were the only municipalities where this was done.

ing figures show the growth in the number of cooking and heating appliances between 1887 and 1937:

1887	..	..	..	1,609
1897	..	..	..	4,094
1907	..	..	..	36,214
1917	..	..	..	150,800
1927	..	..	..	214,941
1937	..	..	..	239,347

The "shilling in the slot" meter was introduced in 1890, and helped considerably in the expansion of the use of gas.

By 1917 most of the existing houses had been supplied. In the new houses built after the war the Gas Committee had to meet severe competition from the Electricity Committee. The fact that the number of gas cookers and heaters continues to increase, although at a slower rate, shows that there is still a separate field for both methods.

The advantage of gas over coal as the most potent method of smoke abatement was first realized in 1891, when the Council passed a special resolution asking for a further reduction of the price of gas for power, heating and cooking "having regard to the urgent need in the interests of the community of reducing the present pollution of the air." This was impossible at that date when consumption was rapidly increasing and continuous extensions of the works had to be made, but in 1895 the price of gas was reduced to 2s. 3d. and the gas meters were installed free of charge.

There is no doubt that the extended use of gas for cooking has been largely responsible for the improvement that has taken place in the purity of the atmosphere. Since domestic grates cause more than half the smoke in our city, gas cookers, which obviate the use of the range in the summer except for heating water, have made a great difference. If the cost of heating water and warming the room by gas were as cheap as by coal, the problem of smoke abatement would be solved—as it is, we must look to improved forms of coke, burnt in specially constructed grates and lit by gas, for a solution within the reach of the smallest incomes.

In 1923 the Gas Committee decided to close the Gaythorn and Rochdale Road works, and manufacture at Bradford Road and at a new works to be built at Partington. In view of the experience

of the ten years after the first part of the scheme was built, experts were doubtful whether the cost of erecting so large a plant outside the city had been justified, and whether the increased demand—which, owing to competition from electricity, and to the fact that Stretford decided to manufacture its own gas, had not been as great as had been anticipated—could not have been met more cheaply by extensions at the Gaythorn works. The original plans were modified after Stretford's decision, and some of the gas is still manufactured at Rochdale Road. At the present time, 49 per cent of the supply comes from the Bradford Road works, 31 per cent from Partington, 17 per cent from Rochdale Road, and 3 per cent from the Droylesden works.

The area of supply is $53\frac{1}{4}$ square miles, and there are 220,251 consumers, which means that 94.2 per cent of all the buildings in Manchester consume gas in one form or another. The two-part tariff introduced in 1935 by which the price of gas is reduced after a minimum fixed charge, is helping to increase the consumption for domestic purposes.

CHAPTER XIV

ELECTRICITY

ELECTRICITY is a modern discovery compared with gas, for it was only when, in 1880, the invention of the carbon-filament lamp made electricity practicable for lighting that its history began. Neither can Manchester claim to have been a pioneer in municipal enterprise in this field, but her forty years' experience of municipal enterprise in gas and water made her anxious that the new arrival should be managed in the same way. Belief in the principle of municipal trading was probably reinforced by a fear that electricity might in the future prove a dangerous rival to gas and that, therefore, it would be as well to have it under the same control. Private companies were applying to Parliament for powers to supply Manchester. The Corporation opposed these in her own Bill of 1881, and asked for power to produce and supply electricity in the area of her gas supply. However, the Board of Trade had just decided that public legislation was necessary on this subject, and so the clause was withdrawn.

Public opinion, as represented in Parliament, had become gradually more favourable to municipal enterprise so far as public utilities were concerned, and the first Electric Lighting Act¹ gave the preference to municipal authorities. If, however, they failed to take the powers, then a private company might step in. Immediately the Act was passed, Manchester applied for a Provisional Order under it. The procedure had been settled by an order given to the Bradford Corporation, under which a small area was allowed, and within this area the Corporation had to undertake to supply any person who asked for it within three years. If it failed, the order could be revoked and one granted to a company instead.

These conditions were intended to prevent municipalities from getting an order, excluding private companies, and then taking no steps to implement it, so that would-be electricity consumers suffered. This was what the Manchester Gas Committee had prob-

¹ 1882.

ably intended to do, otherwise it was difficult to understand why it objected to the condition of compulsory supply. The reason it gave was that having no works of its own, in order to supply within the three years, it would have to contract with a private company, and this it was determined not to do. As the Act provided that if a private company got an order, it had to give the local authority the option of laying the mains along the streets, Manchester felt that she could afford to "wait and see."

The industry developed very slowly during the next seven years. Private companies felt that the 1881 Act had been unfair to them. Not only had the original option of doing the work been given to local authorities, but if they did not take it, and a private company got the order, the local authority at the end of twenty-one years could purchase the undertaking compulsorily at what the companies did not consider a fair valuation. Another reason for the slow development of the industry at this period was the high cost of production compared to that of gas.

One of the Manchester aldermen, Alderman Thompson, was invited during this period to become director of a company which proposed to light the city with electricity. He declined the offer for the reason that Manchester was supplying gas at so low a rate, 2s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet, that he felt that a private company would have very little chance of success. Many of the public buildings throughout the country had adopted the electric lighting system, but very few had maintained it. The Manchester Royal Exchange was lit by electricity for a time, but had also given it up. Up to 1888, although the Board of Trade had granted fifty-nine Provisional Orders and five licences to companies, and fifteen Provisional Orders and two licences to local authorities, none of these powers were then being exercised.

The 1888 Act made certain concessions to private companies, and six companies gave notice to Manchester that they intended to apply for powers to operate in the area. At the instance of Alderman Sir John Harwood, deputy-chairman of the Gas Committee, the Corporation again opposed all of them and made its own application instead. In addition to a belief that electricity was as suitable as gas for municipal management, it was clear that electric lighting would go ahead under the new Act and that if the Corporation did not apply for powers, they would be granted to private com-

panies. A canvass by one of the private companies showed a demand for this form of lighting that surprised the Council. The first extension of the city (1885) had taken place, and those who looked ahead realized that it was only a question of time before more of the outlying districts were absorbed. If a private company supplied these areas, Manchester would eventually have to buy it out at a much greater price than it would cost to supply them herself.¹ The 1888 Act still gave preference to municipalities, and the Corporation received its order in September 1890.

The area to be supplied seems small to us now. It was about two-thirds of a square mile in the centre of the city.

An Electric Lighting sub-Committee of the Gas Committee was appointed, and Dr. John Hopkinson made Consulting Engineer. The Corporation still had to decide whether to carry out the work itself or whether it would contract with a private company to do it. It decided in favour of complete municipalization, borrowing powers were granted, and the first generating station in Dickinson Street was opened in 1893.

Progress was rapid, so rapid that the original plant had to be twice increased in the first year. Eight thousand 16 candle-power lamps were increased to 70,000 within three years. The first year expenses were covered; the second year a handsome profit was made; the third year it was possible to make a contribution of £11,000 to the rates, and also to reduce the cost to consumers 25 per cent. The following year the cost was reduced another 25 per cent, while still more was given to the rates.

Because of the rapid development it was decided in 1897, on the recommendation of the Gas Committee, that the time had arrived when the Electric Lighting sub-Committee should become a separate Standing Committee of the Council. But even at that time no one seriously thought that electricity would become a competitor of the gas undertaking. Neither in London nor in Bradford had the introduction of electric lighting decreased the consumption of gas.

As a result of a visit to Continental plant, the Electricity Committee arranged for the purchase of about eight acres of land in Stuart Street, Bradford, for a site for the new generating station,² to be used for light and for traction. The Corporation had taken

¹ Council Minutes, March 18, 1903.

² December 22, 1898.

over the tramways in 1897 and was preparing to turn over from horse to electric traction.

The Corporation adopted the policy of supplying the out districts on the same terms as the city, and the first agreement was entered into with Levenshulme Urban District Council for the transfer of their Electric Lighting Order to the Corporation for a period of twenty-one years.¹ This principle was followed in subsequent agreements with the other outside authorities, so that the area of supply was thus increased in less than twenty years from two-thirds of a square mile to forty-five square miles.

Electrification of the trams was begun in 1897, and the following year saw Market Street, Piccadilly, London Road, Deansgate and other main roads lit by electric lamps. All this extra demand necessitated extensions of the existing works as well as the erection of the new one at Stuart Street.

In 1903, Mr. (now Sir) S. L. Pearce was made Chief Engineer and Manager, and Manchester became the largest municipal undertaking in the country. He was responsible for the erection of the generating station at Barton, near the Ship Canal, which, held up by the war, was opened in 1923. For some years the Barton station enjoyed the distinction of maintaining a higher thermal efficiency than that of any other steam-driven station in the country. Extensions were made to it in 1928 and again in 1931. Alterations were also made at the Stuart Street station, and Dickinson Street was converted into a distribution station.

During the war the fact that there was complete lack of co-ordination in the electricity supply industry was brought to the attention of the Government. Electricity had made such headway in supplanting coal for power purposes, both in industry and in transport, that it held a position in the national economy different from that of gas.

In 1926 the Central Electricity Board was set up by Parliament, appointed by the Minister of Transport, and the construction of the "Grid" was begun.

The Board selected about a hundred and thirty stations, those which it considered the most efficient, in which all the electrical power required is generated at a considerable saving of cost. Nearly 4,000 miles of high voltage transmission lines carried over the

¹ 1896.

country, up hill and down dale, by the now familiar "pylons," connect up these stations with the points of distribution. The Central Electricity Board does not own these stations, but has a certain amount of control over them. Manchester's stations at Barton and Stuart Street were "selected" by the Board, and connected with the "Grid" in 1934.

The electricity undertaking in Manchester is now the second largest municipal plant in the country, Birmingham being the largest. The Manchester area of supply covers 57 square miles with 153,657 consumers.¹ It includes the city and some outlying areas, and bulk supplies are sold to Stretford, Middleton, Sale, Cheadle and the Lancashire Electric Power Company.

COMPETITION BETWEEN GAS AND ELECTRICITY

From the beginning of the present century electricity has steadily become an increasingly keen competitor of gas, invading one field after another.

As regards industry, the main advance of electricity has been for power, in which field gas now plays a very minor role, though gas still holds its own for other important industrial purposes.

As regards street lighting, the Electricity and Gas Committees have for years waged a very keen war in Manchester. Having been established first and having been strengthened by new technical inventions, the bulk of street lighting is still done by gas, but electricity is gaining fast, and all the new street lighting in Manchester is now done by electricity.

In the domestic field lighting is, of course, done by electricity, but a few years ago gas looked like having a monopoly of cooking. Here again electricity is encroaching, and both for cooking and domestic heating there is keen competition between the two.

Both of the Committees spend money in advertising and in showrooms in the city. Very fine showrooms have been fitted up in the extension of the Town Hall. Energetic branches of the Women's Electrical Association and the Women's Gas Council exist in the city. They carry out excellent propaganda work by

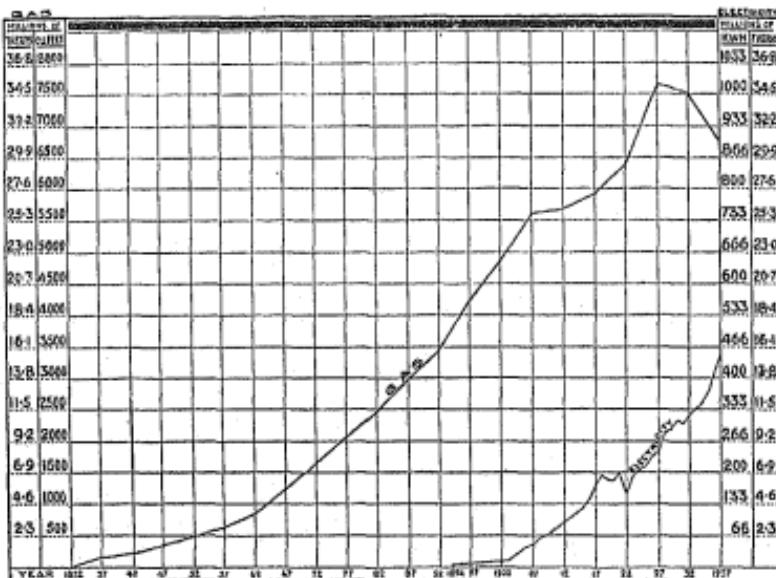
¹ In 1927 there were only 42,888 consumers.

means of cooking demonstrations, travelling showrooms, lectures and visits to works and institutions using electricity or gas.

The following table shows the proportions in which gas and electricity are now being used for the different purposes in Manchester:

		<i>Gas</i>	<i>Electricity</i>
Industrial and commercial	..	27.2 per cent	61.9 per cent
Domestic	..	62.7 "	15.2 "
Trams	..	—	8.4 "
Street lighting	..	9.3 "	1.9 "
Bulk supplies	..	0.6 "	12.5 "

The curves on page 372 show the total production of electricity and gas in Manchester during the last century. Perhaps the most striking thing is that gas is still so far ahead of electricity. The graphs show the total amounts of gas and electricity produced in millions of cubic feet and in millions of kilowatt hours respectively. They also show the total quantity produced in each case measured in therms, and it will be seen that while the electricity produced in the last year was equivalent to under sixteen million therms, the gas produced was equivalent to nearly double the amount. On the other hand, gas attained its maximum in 1927 and is now 10 per cent less; during the same period the output of electricity has increased by over 50 per cent. It is an interesting speculation, to which we offer no answer, at what date the two curves will cross one another.



AMOUNTS OF GAS AND ELECTRICITY PRODUCED IN MANCHESTER EACH YEAR AND EQUIVALENT HEAT VALUES.

This diagram can be criticized on the grounds that electricity is mainly produced for power and not for heat, but so long as this is borne in mind, we believe that it best shows the relative positions of the amount of the production of gas and electricity.

CHAPTER XV

TRANSPORT

A CENTURY ago the stage-coach was being superseded by the railway. Before then, the stage-coach had been the accepted means of mail and passenger transport between one town and another. In 1754 the "flying coach"—otherwise a stage-coach which travelled at an accelerated speed—made its appearance in Manchester, and it was announced that "incredible as it may appear, this coach will actually arrive in London four days and a half after leaving Manchester." Manchester got a three-day stage-coach to London in 1770, and seven years later communication by stage-coach was opened between Manchester and Liverpool.

As regards transport within the town of Manchester itself, this was of much later development than transport between one town and another, in view of the fact that the extremities of the town were in easy walking distance of each other. Hackney carriages were established in Manchester in 1810, and in 1815 as many as twenty coaches, but not more, were allowed to ply for hire in Manchester and Salford, or within four miles of the town. They stood in St. Ann's Square and at the top of Market Street. About this time the horse omnibus emerged and the first service, in 1824, was run by a certain John Greenwood. This was started to accommodate merchants and others. The buses at first used to run mainly to places like Pendleton, Ardwick and Cheetham Hill, where the middle class of those days resided, and after some thirty years had elapsed, an entirely new style of vehicle, much longer than those in use and double decked, drawn by three horses abreast, was introduced by a Mr. McEwen. It had accommodation for seventeen passengers inside and twenty-five outside, and the fare was reduced from 6d. to 3d. In a short time McEwen, finding his capital insufficient, disposed of his property to Mr. Alderman Mackie,¹ who made considerable additions to the plant, started several new routes and greatly stimulated the traffic. By the year 1865, omnibuses were

¹ Member of the Council and Mayor from 1857 to 1860.

being run on a fairly extensive scale in Manchester by different people, and in that year a step was taken towards unifying the system by the formation of the Manchester Carriage Company. Alderman Mackie was the first chairman of the new company and Mr. John Greenwood, son of the originator of the first omnibuses in Manchester, vice-chairman and managing director. The operations of the company were gradually extended until a service of three-horse buses ran along most of the main roads. The minimum fares charged were 3d. inside the omnibus and 2d. outside.

Until 1858, tramways were unknown in Great Britain. Convincing of their commercial value, an enterprising American, Mr. George Francis Train, came to this country and determined to introduce tramways, or street railways, as they were called in America, here. Mr. Train first tried at Liverpool, but that city would not listen to his proposition; however, the Commissioners of Birkenhead gave him permission to lay a tramway four miles long. The work completed, he next attacked London. Here he met with decided opposition from the omnibus interests, but he finally obtained permission to lay one or two miles of tram lines in 1861.¹ He seems to have shown his models to some people in Manchester who invited him to a trial in this city, but nothing came of the invitation.

In 1862, Mr. John Haworth, a Manchester town councillor, got permission to put down a tramway from Salford to Pendleton, which was also used by the omnibuses because of the smoothness of the track compared with the ordinary paving of those days.

Meanwhile, in the late 'sixties, English engineers seem to have awakened to the advantage of tramways and a considerable number of designs for laying them were patented. Glasgow was one of the first local authorities to obtain Parliamentary power to lay tram-lines and lease them to a tramway company.²

In 1870 a general Tramways Act enabled local authorities to obtain a Provisional Order to construct and own tramways, and the consent of the local authority was required before an order was granted to a company. At the end of twenty-one years the local authority had the right of compulsory purchase of the undertaking and thereafter, at the termination of recurring periods of

¹ *My Life in Many States and in Foreign Lands*, by George F. Train.

² Glasgow Tramways Act, 1870. The first lines were opened in 1872.

seven years, on the basis of its structural value, without any allowance for goodwill. This Act did not, however, authorize any local authority to operate trams itself and between 1870 and 1882 all tramways constructed by local authorities were invariably leased to companies at an annual rental. The Standing Orders of both Houses were amended so as to forbid the introduction of clauses in local Bills empowering a local authority to work a tramway.

As soon as the Act was passed, various companies gave notice of their intention to apply for powers to lay tramways in Manchester. The city authorities decided to oppose these Bills on the ground that powers to lay down, maintain, regulate and control tramways ought to be alone conferred upon the local authority. In 1875 the Council itself obtained power to construct tramways in certain streets.¹ Thus, as in the case of gas and water and electricity, Manchester decided itself to control the development of the new public services.

The first part of the system was ready for use by horse cars in 1877, and an agreement was made with Messrs. Turton and Busby who arranged to pay a rental of 10 per cent per annum of the cost of construction. The lessees were required to run workmen's cars morning and evening at fares of not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per mile; to limit fares for adults to 3d. for a seat inside the car and 2d. outside, and to affix no advertisements. Out of the rental of 10 per cent, the city had to pay all the fixed charges and to maintain the track and paving in proper condition. From time to time other lines were constructed and leased to the Manchester Carriage and Tramway Company,² and the agreements which were made terminated at various dates between 1898 and 1901.

Manchester's tramways proved a financial success. In the first seventeen years the rent paid by the companies not only wiped out the capital account, but enabled £97,600 to be paid in aid of the city rates, an annual average of about £5,740. The lessees, too, did well. For many years they were able to pay a dividend of from 8 to 10 per cent, as well as to build up a reserve fund.

During these early years the whole system was in an experimental stage. Bargains as regards leases were made in the dark. Few of the

¹ Manchester Corporation Tramways Orders Confirmation Act, 1875.

² This company had taken over the undertaking owned by Turton and Busby.

lessees had more than a crude idea of the cost of maintenance. Some insisted on their maximum legal rates and, making poor progress, allowed their plant and lines to fall into disrepair; in other large towns, tramway companies did exceedingly well. But prosperous or not prosperous, when these companies were asked to reduce fares, to give greater convenience as regards the service, reduce the hours of labour, or improve the means of traction, the response, with few exceptions, was that with such a limited tenure they could not take any risks or make any sacrifices. Their policy was to make what profit they could against the possibility of compulsory sale at the end of the lease.

It was perhaps the success of the municipalization of Glasgow's tramways that was largely responsible for the growth of this movement in other towns. In her private Act of 1870 she had obtained the option of working the tramways herself as well as the power to construct and lease them.¹ They were leased to a private company for twenty-three years. During a considerable part of its term, the company had paid annual dividends of 10 to 14 per cent, and for another considerable series of years from 20 to 24 per cent. When the City Council asked the company to reduce fares, raise wages, shorten hours, it said it could not afford it. Glasgow tried in every possible way to reach a fair and just arrangement, but without success, and only went into municipal operation in 1894 when forced to the conclusion that no plan which would safeguard the interests of its citizens would be acceptable to the company. The city introduced electric traction, reduced fares, increased wages, and reduced hours. The service was extended and improved, and the city made, not a deficit, but a considerable profit for the ratepayers.

The Standing Order forbidding the insertion of clauses in local Bills authorizing the authority to work the tramways, was not revoked until 1896, when, the success of the tramways at Glasgow being assured, other towns were demanding the same privileges. In the session of 1897, Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh and seven other towns secured the same powers, including, as in the former cases, power to introduce mechanical traction.

The first definite move in Manchester towards municipal operation was made on February 20, 1895, when a special committee was

¹ The Glasgow Street Tramways Act, 1870, sec. 86.

appointed to consider and report upon its desirability. Some members of the Council thought the step premature, others thought it inopportune, and that if the tramways were worked by the Corporation, the probability would be that they would not be worked so economically and the rates would suffer. The Committee, however, recommended the Council to obtain powers to operate the tramways, not so much with the idea of actually exercising them, as of putting the city in a better position to bargain with the company when the leases expired. The first leases expired in 1898, but the principal leases did not expire until April 27, 1901. The Council approved the report, but at the town's meeting, held on November 13th¹ to secure permission to promote a Bill, the recommendation regarding the tramways was rejected. The application was regarded as being in "indecent haste," and it was held that the Corporation was not as competent as the company to buy horses and materials. The Committee reconsidered the matter, but were still of the opinion that power to operate should be obtained, and at a town's meeting on March 4, 1897, the first to be held at night, the recommendation regarding the tramways was approved. The general feeling, however, was still against municipal operation, if satisfactory terms could be secured from the company. A Bill giving the city the necessary authority to operate the tramways, if it wished, was passed in 1897.

Negotiations were entered into with the company with the object of getting a better service, through the introduction of mechanical traction. Apart from this question, the service rendered by the company had been on the whole satisfactory. The fares had been high, but public agitation had resulted in a considerable reduction. Many of the men worked as many as seventy hours per week, but no movement for municipal control had grown out of that fact. The principal arguments advanced in favour of municipalization were:

- (1) The need for an improvement of the services, especially as regards the mode of traction.
- (2) The transfer of the profits from the shareholders to the public, the company having been very prosperous.
- (3) Lower fares.

¹ 1895.

- (4) The wisdom of having all local monopolies in the hands of the authority, especially those which had a close connection with the streets.
- (5) Relief of congestion of population by making suburban areas more accessible. A municipality, unlike a company, could afford, for social reasons, to lay and operate a line that would not be at first remunerative.

In opposition it was urged:

- (1) That the responsibility and extent of the undertaking was too great for the City Council.
- (2) That the difficulties of unifying a system running through so many local areas were insuperable.
- (3) That the present service was good, fares low and the financial profit to the city quite satisfactory.

The debate continued, and in December 1897 the Special Committee submitted another report giving information on the working of municipal tramways in Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Bristol, Brussels, Vienna and Milan. Salford had also decided to municipalize, and some of the surrounding local authorities had expressed a willingness to lease their lines to Manchester, if it would operate them upon reasonable terms. The Committee recommended buying out the tramway company, and the substitution of electric traction for horses. The report was adopted with only two or three dissentients.

In January 1898, Mr. John Moffatt McElroy was appointed Secretary to the Tramways Committee, and two years later General Manager of the Tramways Department.

The change-over from private to municipal operation was made in Manchester later than in other big cities, probably because the private company was on the whole well managed. Although the Council was determined from the first to own the tramlines, it regarded the question of operation as one not of principle but of expediency.

In 1897 the Council got power to adopt electric traction for its tramways and, in 1899, to make agreements with certain outside local authorities for the working of their lines in connection with the Manchester system, and by 1903, when all the leases with

the company had run out, the whole system was worked by the city.

For the fifty-six miles of track owned by the Corporation, the company had paid an annual rent of £22,500. When the Corporation had paid interest and sinking fund charges out of this sum, between £4,000 and £5,000 went to the relief of rates. The fares charged by the Corporation in 1909, as compared with those charged by the old company, showed an average reduction of 40 per cent, whereas the total amount paid in the relief of the rates during the eight years ending in March 1909 was an average of £47,125 a year, ten times as much as the annual average sums previously paid in relief of rates. The hours of labour were reduced from seventy to fifty-four a week, and wages were increased. These concessions to the ratepayers, the travelling public and the employees did not undermine the financial stability of the undertaking, but it is impossible to draw any valid comparison between the company's operation of the service and the city's, since the introduction of electric traction made so great a difference.

Shortly after the municipal system was in full working order in Manchester, the Tramways Department organized a somewhat ambitious parcel-carrying scheme. Special electric freight cars were built, a considerable number of horses and vans were purchased, and some one hundred and fifty collecting and distributing agencies were established. Parcels were collected and delivered in Manchester and over sixty-six districts outside, including all the large towns except Bolton within an average radius of some eight miles around Manchester. Operations began early in 1905, but in May of that year a writ was issued on behalf of a carrier company in the city. Judgment was given in February of the following year to the effect that the Corporation was only allowed to carry on business as carriers in connection with the tramway undertaking, and that it had considerably exceeded its legal powers. A new system was begun on October 29, 1906, which was limited to the area served by the Corporation tramways and to small parcels such as could be carried by ordinary trams. In spite of the limitation, this side of the transport undertaking has greatly increased. Thirty years ago 141,715 parcels were carried, and this year (1937) 3,000,000.

The chief transport problem of the last fifteen years in Manchester, as elsewhere, has been the supersession of electrically

driven trams by motor buses. In 1914, Manchester obtained an extension of her somewhat limited powers to run buses¹ and ran them partly in order to safeguard the tramway receipts from the competition of outside bus companies. Later, they were used to link up the outside tramway districts and to run express services at higher fares. The first of these express services was the Cheadle and Heywood route (1927), followed by the Rochdale, Altrincham, Bolton, Hyde and other services. These proved so successful that they were developed on a comprehensive scale.

The policy of abandoning tramways altogether in favour of buses came gradually. There were many sides to the question, not always appreciated by the ordinary passenger, who is naturally concerned only to get a fast and convenient service at the lowest cost. Much capital has been sunk in the tramlines, rolling stock, and overhead wires. If trams were abandoned, not only would this capital have to be repaid, as well as the loans for the buses, but the undertaking would have to relay the track as an ordinary roadway. Even if the buses should eventually prove profitable enough to carry this charge, there were other considerations that affect the ratepayers as ratepayers and not as passengers.

The Transport Department, as it has been called since November 1929, pays rates on its tracks, overhead wires and buildings. In 1937 this amounted to £41,264, the tramway section paying £33,100 and the buses £8,164. Although buses would need the tramway sheds as garages, there would still be a distinct loss to the rates when the substitution was complete. The Tramways Department not only constructed the tracks, but renewed them from time to time when necessary. If they were abandoned, the Highway Committee would have to maintain the whole roadway.² This extra charge is estimated at £28,000 per annum. Finally, but perhaps most important of all, the Electricity Department would lose one of its best customers if petrol- or oil-driven buses were substituted for electrically driven trams.

Until a few years ago it was doubtful if buses would prove cheaper as well as more convenient, because the double-deck bus, which alone could carry the requisite number of passengers to make

¹ Obtained in 1900, Manchester Corporation Tramways Act.

² The Transport Department contributes a capital sum towards the cost of replacing the road.

it pay, was not allowed by the Watch Committee to run alongside the trams in Manchester, thereby increasing the number of vehicles in the streets. Under conditions then existing, the policy of the Tramways Committee¹ was sound, but it would probably have been better if Manchester had started gradually to convert to buses earlier. This start was made in 1929, when Mr. Stuart Pilcher succeeded Mr. Henry Mattinson as General Manager.

The success of the first route to be converted justified the conversion of other routes. It was, however, only in July of this year (1937) that the Council definitely adopted the policy of the gradual abandonment of all its tramways. Buses had proved quicker and cheaper, and much more popular with the public. The outstanding debt on the tramways will not be liquidated until 1974, although the bulk of it will have been repaid by 1950, and the success of the buses shows that the undertaking will be in a financial position to carry it.

To-day, December 1937, 38 per cent of the system has been converted from trams to buses, and 54 per cent of the total revenue is earned by the buses.² The number of passengers on buses and trams together has increased by more than eleven millions since 1933.³

The electric tram is disappearing all over England and in the chief countries abroad. In Paris, Berlin, Rome, New York, the process is going on, and in London the complete elimination of the tramway is expected in about five years. In fifty-one of the smaller local authorities and in the case of forty-five companies, trams have now been entirely abandoned. Liverpool and Sheffield are the only places where an increase in miles of tramway track has taken place in recent years.

The tram is doomed, but it is not yet clear what will take its place, whether the petrol- or oil-driven bus, or the electrically driven trolley-bus. The advantages of the latter are mainly the continued use of electricity, made from British coal, which benefits the consumers of electricity through lowering the price, and the avoidance of fumes which are still inseparable from the petrol- and

¹ Before the setting up of Traffic Commissioners by the Road Traffic Act, 1930, the local authority was the licensing authority.

² Report of Transport Committee and Finance Committee on Tramway Abandonment (No. 1,000), July 1, 1937.

³ Annual Report and Abstract of Accounts of Transport Department, 1937.

oil-driven bus, which uses imported oil. The rates also will continue to be paid on the overhead equipment as in the case of trams. The chief disadvantage is that, although the mobility of the trolley-bus is greater than that of the tram, it is not so great as that of the motor bus, as its sphere of activity is still limited. Also one trolley-bus cannot pass another, so that a full bus blocks the wires for those coming behind it. It appears, too, as if the running costs per mile will be higher than those of the buses. However, the experiment is about to be made, and by the beginning of 1938 two routes will have been converted. The final decision will rest upon the results of this experiment.¹

Apart from ensuring that the method of transport is the best and cheapest possible, the Transport Committee plays an important part in the housing policy of the Council. The cost and the time involved in getting to and from work is a vital factor in deciding a family to move from the congested inner quarters of the city to one or other of the housing estates in the suburbs. After rent, it is no exaggeration to say that the cost of transport, especially if there are many earning members of a family, is what determines it in its choice of estate. Many who would otherwise like to live at Wythenshawe, where the return fare to the centre of the city is 8d., have to stay in Ardwick or Hulme, where 1d. single fare takes them to work, or where they can walk there and back. The Transport Committee is fully aware of this aspect of the problem, and is doing its best to meet it consistently with treating fairly its other passengers, and with keeping the undertaking from being a burden on the rates. Three years ago, for instance, when a reduction of fares was possible, all stages to the housing estates were reduced by ½d. For Wythenshawe, a special fare of 8d. return from all parts of the estate was fixed, which is about ½d. a mile. There are some members of the Council who would like a flat rate throughout the city, so that whether a distance of one mile or seven miles were covered, the payment would be the same. A policy of this kind would undoubtedly facilitate the movement of the population from the centre to the circumference, but whether it would be fair to those residents who would still have to live in Collyhurst, Hulme,

¹ The decision to convert these two routes to trolley buses was taken by the Council, which accepted an amendment to that effect without even asking for the opinion of the Transport Committee on the matter.

and Ardwick, and who now benefit by the long 1d. fare, is not so certain.

Until 1921 the Transport Committee, like the other trading committees, contributed annually a handsome sum in relief of rates, but this was stopped when the Council decided¹ that all the public utilities should spend profits on reduction of charges.

In 1937 the Transport Department operated 17,820,733 miles on its tramways, and 19,369,625 miles on its bus routes. It carried over 346 million passengers, of which 56·3 per cent were carried on the trams. The average length of the 1d. stage was 1·36 miles on the trams and 1·41 on the buses (converted tram routes), 1·12 miles on local services and ·86 of a mile on the express services.

¹ See above, p. 144.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SHIP CANAL

THE Ship Canal is different from the Corporation trading committees and the part played in it by the City Council is, we believe, unique. The enterprise, which was intended to be a money-making concern, was launched in the usual way as a joint stock company, the capital being subscribed by the public. When the capital proved insufficient and the project was on the point of failure, the City Council, realizing the benefit to Manchester which would follow the completion of the canal, stepped in and lent the Company the necessary money to continue. It risked the ratepayers' money in an undertaking which, unlike markets, gas, electricity and transport, was not a monopoly, and could not become one. The Ship Canal had to meet the competition of the railways, and later of road transport.

The Manchester Corporation Act of 1891 was the first Act of Parliament which gave power to a municipality to invest in an outside undertaking, and we can well understand the strong opposition that was raised to the proposal. Many of the members of the City Council had privately invested in the Company, and their holdings were in danger. It could easily have been, and in some countries would have been, represented as a municipal scandal. But apart from the fact that many working men had also invested their savings in the Company the public seems to have soon realized that it was going to be of benefit to the city, and therefore worthy of the support of the ratepayers.

The idea of a ship canal to Manchester had simmered in the public mind there since 1825, when a proposal to construct a canal from Manchester to the mouth of the River Dee was put forward. In 1838 and 1840 more modest proposals were made but nothing came of them. The idea, however, was not lost sight of, and in 1877 petitions and reports were brought before the Manchester Chamber of Commerce by Mr. George Hicks, with the assistance of a London engineer, Mr. Fulton, and after some discussion a

resolution was passed that "it would be of the greatest service to the interests of Manchester and the trade of the district to have an improved waterway."

The 'eighties were a period of bad trade in Manchester. For the first time since the incorporation of the city rateable value declined and did not fully recover until 1891. People tried to find a reason for the decay of Manchester's trade. When times were prosperous and profits high little attention was given to the details of expense, but when the reverse was the case costs were carefully scanned and people soon began to complain of the charges made by the Liverpool dock authorities and by the railway companies. Glasgow, too, at this time had singled herself out for attention by bringing the sea to her doors and making the town an important and busy port, and it was thought that Manchester might profitably emulate her example. Thus the idea of the Ship Canal was born, and its success in the initial stages was undoubtedly due to a forcible and convincing pamphlet published in May 1882 under the pseudonym of "Mancuniensis." This had an immense sale, and passed through several editions. But the real start of the canal dates from a meeting in The Towers, Didsbury, on June 27, 1882, summoned by Mr. Daniel Adamson.¹ To him belongs the credit of launching this great enterprise and courageously fighting its battles in Parliament against tremendous odds until victory was achieved. To this meeting were invited the Mayors of Manchester and the surrounding towns, the heads of the principal commercial houses in the city, the leaders of co-operative and labour movements, and several well-known capitalists. A provisional committee was appointed, and a guarantee fund started of £25,000 to cover preliminary expenses. Councillor—later Sir Bosdin—Leech raised the question of aid from the rates in the Council, but although many aldermen and councillors contributed personally to the guarantee fund the Corporation at this stage only gave moral support. With the exception of the *City News* the Manchester Press was cautious in its attitude, and in some cases even unfriendly to the scheme.

The provisional committee set to work with vigour, and held public meetings all over the area. The scheme was supported by the Corporations of Manchester and Salford, and by many of the surrounding towns. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce also

¹ *History of the Manchester Ship Canal*, by Sir Bosdin Leech, vol. i, p. 80.

agreed to support the Bill which the provisional committee were promoting.

The chief opposition came from the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board and the railways, and although the Bill passed through the House of Commons it was thrown out by the House of Lords. The following year, 1884, a new Bill was introduced which passed the Lords but was thrown out by the Commons, owing to the united opposition of the Liverpool Corporation, the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and the Mersey Docks Board. The provisional committee did not mean to give up the fight, and the Manchester City Council now gave practical proof of its support by the grant of £18,000—a 2d. rate—towards the Parliamentary expenses.¹ Salford and Warrington also contributed, and a third Bill was introduced. In order to meet Liverpool's opposition a drastic alteration in the scheme was made, which necessitated the construction of fifteen additional miles of canal. In spite of this concession the Liverpool opposition continued, but this time the Bill passed through both Houses of Parliament and received the Royal Assent July 1885.

Great jubilation marked its passing. Mr. Adamson's homecoming was made the occasion for a great demonstration, and the Corporation of Manchester invited him to a banquet in honour of the event. Church bells were rung, flags were put out, and bands of music paraded the streets, while a great trades procession, four miles in length, was organized.

But money did not come in as quickly as the promoters had hoped, and the opponents of the canal were not idle. They ridiculed the scheme and prophesied all manner of evil in order to frighten investors. It was therefore decided in November 1885 to deposit a Bill for the purpose of obtaining power to pay interest during construction, and this was passed in the following year. But still the progress of the canal was hindered for want of support. The situation was now becoming desperate since if before the following August (1887) a certain sum of capital was not raised, the time limit fixed by Parliament would be passed, and the powers would lapse. In order to restore public confidence in the scheme, it was decided to appoint a consultative committee, entirely independent of the Board of Directors and consisting of leading business men of

¹ City Council Minutes, October 29, 1884.

influence, who were to go into the whole matter and report as to its practicability and soundness, and also to advise as to the obtaining of capital. The Mayor of Manchester¹ was made chairman, and the committee, after a painstaking investigation, issued a favourable report on November 26, 1886.² As practical evidence of their belief in the scheme the consultative committee agreed to put their names down for £68,200. In the report it was made a condition of success that the Board of Directors should be reconstituted and strengthened. To this Mr. Adamson, the then chairman of the company, took exception, and in consequence of differences of opinion on this point between himself and his co-directors he retired early in 1887. Without his dogged determination, it is said, the Bill would never have been obtained, and the canal in all probability never have been constructed. His retirement ended his official connection with the Ship Canal, but he continued to work for its success until his death, which occurred early in 1890. Lord Egerton was appointed chairman in his stead. A canvass for funds was organized, and well within the specified time the directors had secured the necessary capital.³ By the end of the year 1887 the construction of the canal was started in earnest.

The early history of the canal was a record of calamity after calamity. The perversity of man was overcome only to be followed by that of Nature. The death of the contractor in 1889 was followed next year by disastrous floods which caused immense damage and delayed the progress of the work.

Owing to this extra expense it was discovered in January 1891 that there was not sufficient capital to complete the work, and on being approached the City Council finally agreed to advance £3,000,000 and become debenture holders. In return for this assistance it was thought desirable that the Corporation should nominate five of the fifteen directors. Although at first it was suggested that Salford should also assist to the extent of £1,000,000, it was finally decided "to leave to Manchester all the honour, glory and possible loss in the transaction."

The Corporation's Bill for power to assist the canal passed in July 1891, and the money was raised by the issue by the Corporation

¹ Sir J. J. Harwood.

² *History of the Manchester Ship Canal*, by Sir Bosdin Leech, vol. ii, p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 6.

of 3 per cent Debenture Stock. Five Corporation directors were appointed on the Ship Canal Board.

There soon arose a divergence of opinion between the shareholders' directors and those appointed by the Corporation, particularly Alderman Sir John Harwood and Councillor Southern. The Corporation directors had come to the conclusion that the business was not being economically administered, and they felt that a complete reconstruction of the management was necessary. A report submitted to the City Council to this effect in December 1891¹ created a great sensation, and the Press teemed with articles and letters on the question.

The outcome was, however, an arrangement whereby the executive or spending department of the Ship Canal was composed of four directors from the Manchester Corporation and three shareholders' directors, Sir John Harwood being elected the chairman of the committee. But even this plan was not successful in enabling the canal to be constructed on the capital already borrowed, including the three millions lent by the Corporation, and in October 1892 the Council decided that Parliamentary powers should be sought to advance a further two million pounds to complete the canal, on 4½ per cent debentures as before, and that in return for this aid the Corporation should ask for power to nominate a further five directors on the Ship Canal Board, making ten out of fifteen. The Board would not agree to this representation, and suggested that the number of directors should be increased to twenty-one, the Corporation having power to appoint eleven. The relations between the canal company and the Corporation became somewhat strained, and the situation complicated by a belated offer from Salford and Oldham to lend one million pounds respectively, and all three Corporations deposited Bills in Parliament. When the Bills came before a Select Committee of the Lords in 1893, however, agreement had been reached with the Manchester Corporation, who made a firm offer of two millions. The city was to be assured of a clear majority on the Board, and the election of the Deputy Chairman was to vest in the Corporation until the loan was paid off. Unless these terms were agreed to, the Corporation had stated that they would not allow other loans to rank *pari passu* with their first loan of three millions. Salford and Oldham, some-

¹ City Council Minutes, December 9, 1891.

what disgruntled, were obliged to withdraw their Bills, but as some recompense for their disappointment the Ship Canal Company paid their expenses. The Corporation's loan to the Ship Canal Company was therefore increased to five million pounds.

After this good progress was made, and on January 1, 1894, "hundreds of people were trooping about Albert Square to let in the New Year and with the intention of commemorating the opening of the Ship Canal."¹ By the middle of January large steamers laded with cotton had begun to arrive, and the Canal was officially opened by Queen Victoria on May 21, 1894.

The troubles of the canal were not yet over, however, for a month later Sir John Harwood made a somewhat depressing speech to the City Council which was followed by his resignation from the directorate.

The canal, however, again emerged from its difficulties. In December 1898 for the first time the Company was able to pay out of revenue not only the whole of the interest on the first and second debentures, but also a small proportion of the half-year's interest due to the Corporation. It was hoped that this marked a new era in the history of the Company, although it was thought well "not to indulge in undue or premature elation as there is an element of uncertainty in shipping matters."²

From time to time since then the Corporation has come to the help of the canal. In return for this help, the right of the Corporation to appoint directors was continued in perpetuity, and the number of these directors was always to exceed by one the number elected by the shareholders. There are to-day twenty-one directors, eleven appointed by the City Council, and ten elected by the shareholders. The chairman is elected by the shareholders' directors and the deputy-chairman by the Corporation directors. The City Council fills any vacancy in its representation on the Board by election, and for some years now there has been an agreement when a vacancy occurs to get proportional representation of parties on the Ship Canal directorate. Within the political party the question is generally settled by a vote of the caucus, and although an impartial observer might sometimes wonder on what principle the final selection is made, the system works satisfactorily.

¹ *History of the Manchester Ship Canal*, by Sir Bosdin Leech, vol. ii, pp. 186 and 188.

² City Council Minutes, March 1, 1899.

So far no woman councillor has been appointed, and as fees for attendance at board meetings are paid, it will doubtless be some years yet before women are allowed to share in these coveted posts.¹

In 1914 the Corporation again came to the assistance of the canal company, and took over about £700,000 of mortgage debentures which had fallen in and were not renewed by the original holders, so that to-day the Corporation holds about six and a half million pounds in an undertaking of approximately twenty million pounds. Owing to the suspension of interest, the charge on the rates was at one time 1s. 10d. in the £, but for some years now the company has prospered and the Corporation has received its full interest and dividend each year.

This is not the place to attempt an account of the Ship Canal to-day and its place in Manchester's commercial life. It was accepted and later supported by the Corporation as a means of combating the depression that had set in in the 'eighties, when the progress of Manchester, which had been so spectacular in the early part of the nineteenth century, seemed to be arrested. The Ship Canal was itself a bold scheme, and the action of the City Council in coming to its assistance at critical moments of its history showed courage and imagination. There is no doubt that its action has been justified and that the traffic brought by the canal was one of the factors that helped Manchester to increase her trade and her rateable value.

Apart from these indirect benefits, however, it is unfortunate that so many of the direct gains have gone not to Manchester but to Salford and Stretford. The principal docks are in Salford, and the canal pays more rates to Salford than to Manchester. The growth of Trafford Park as an industrial estate is due almost entirely to the Ship Canal, and it is situated in Stretford, not in Manchester. These arguments were advanced when Manchester tried twice unsuccessfully to include Stretford within the city.² If the Corporation, when it first came to the assistance of the canal, had promoted a Bill to include the docks and Trafford Park, there might have been some chance of success, and the ratepayers of Manchester would

¹ The present chairman of the company, Sir Frederick West, was for many years a distinguished member of the City Council. In 1917 he was appointed a director by the Corporation. On resigning that position in July 1923, he was elected to the Board by the shareholders' directors, and in the following November he succeeded to the chairmanship of the company rendered vacant by the retirement of Mr. Alfred Watkin.

² See above, p. 129.

have benefited directly as well as indirectly. Still, on an all too rare occasion when our city fathers did take a long view, and had the courage to risk the rates in what was then by no means a safe undertaking, it would be ungracious of us to criticize them for not taking an even longer one. The qualities of courage, imagination and enterprise shown by Bosdin Leech, John Harwood, John Mark and the town's meeting which followed their lead are not too common in our municipal history.

Manchester is to-day the fifth largest port in the United Kingdom. The Ship Canal has enabled ocean-going vessels up to 15,000 tons deadweight to come right up to the city, and the area between the docks and Eastham "is probably the busiest industrial zone of its size in the world."¹

¹ *Manchester Guardian*, December 2, 1937.



PART V

CHAPTER XVII

THE COUNCIL THROUGH THE CENTURY

THE Council that met on December 16, 1838, in the York Hotel, King Street,¹ consisted of sixty four members, forty-eight councillors—three for each of the fourteen wards, and six for New Cross—and sixteen aldermen. It was an unopposed Council for, owing to the fight about the validity of the charter, the Conservative party decided to take no part in the elections. Ten of the aldermen were elected from the members of the Council, Thomas Potter, William Neild, Richard Cobden and Alexander Kay being amongst them, and the remaining six were elected by the Council from outside.² They were leading business men and Whigs. Paul Willert, who served until his death in 1879, and Elkanah Armitage, later to be Mayor, John Edward Taylor, founder of the *Manchester Guardian*, Archibald Prentice, the Radical journalist and writer, and George Wilson of Anti-Corn Law fame, were also members of that first Council. Of the sixty-four members, thirty-four were merchants and manufacturers, ten were shopkeepers. The leading group of aldermen,³ of which Sir Thomas Potter,⁴ Mayor for the first two years, was the oldest, directed the affairs of the Council for some years.

Self-made men, at a time when fortunes could be made more easily and more quickly than at almost any other period of our history, they had also a strong sense of public duty. Some of them had been Police Commissioners—Thomas Potter was one of the Gas Directors—and county magistrates sitting for the Manchester division, and their knowledge of public affairs as well as their proved business ability was of inestimable value in the early days of the new experiment in democratic government. Nonconformists

¹ See above, p. 97.

² This power has not been exercised in Manchester since 1864, although in other authorities—the L.C.C. for example—it is in force.

³ Richard Cobden and George Wilson soon became so engrossed in the Anti-Corn Law campaign that they took little part in the Council's work, and both left it in 1844.

⁴ He died March 20, 1845, aged seventy-one. He was knighted in 1840.

—many of them met every Sunday at the Cross Street Chapel—they were united by religion, by politics and by common business interests.

Those who associate Manchester business men with the doctrine of *laissez-faire* may be surprised by our account of the drastic interference with private property which the insistence upon the provision of privies entailed.¹ But that would be to misunderstand that doctrine which was concerned entirely with freeing trade. If later the same arguments were applied outside the economic sphere, the blame must not be put on Adam Smith and his disciples.

Macaulay, one of the strongest supporters of Free Trade, was also a supporter of legislation to regulate housing. In one of his speeches he said, "I am, I believe, as strongly attached as any member of this House to the principle of free trade rightly understood. Trade, considered merely as trade, considered merely with reference to the pecuniary interest of the contracting parties, can scarcely be too free. But there is a great deal of trade which cannot be considered as trade, and which affects higher pecuniary interests. And to say that Government never ought to regulate such trade is a monstrous proposition, a proposition at which Adam Smith would have stood aghast."²

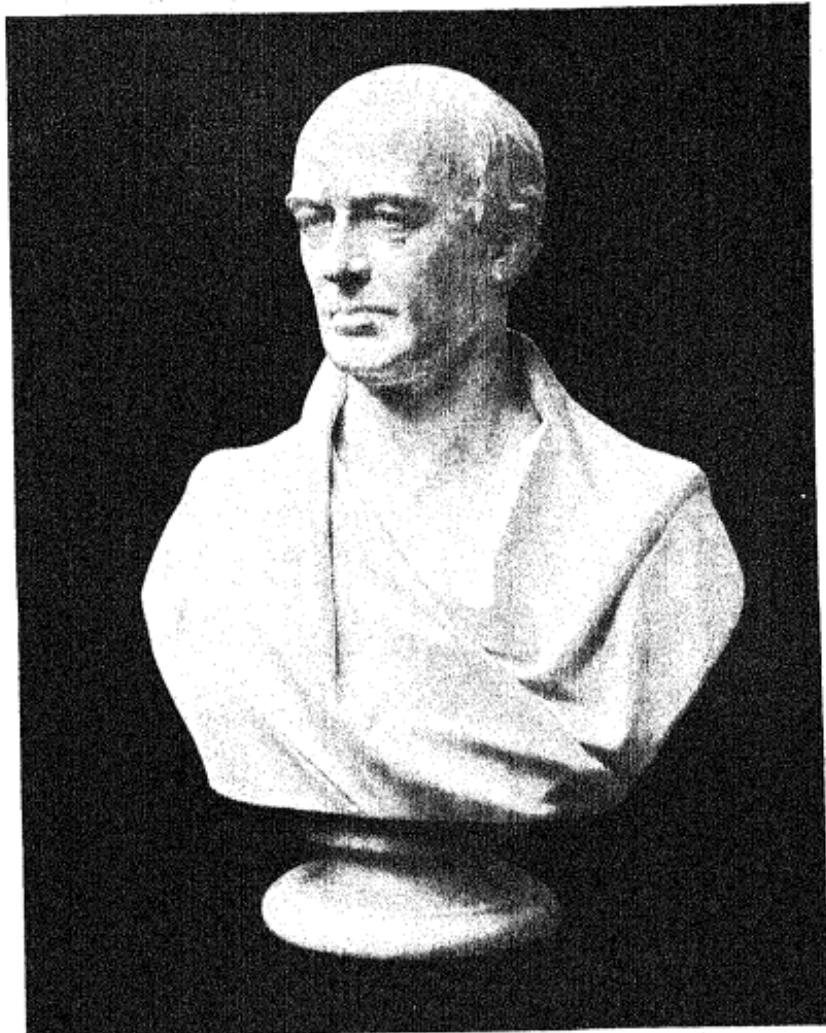
It was this spirit that produced the spate of Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Reports that form such a striking feature of the early Victorian period. The administration of the Poor Laws, the state of the factory children, of the sanitary conditions of the labouring classes, of the health of large towns and populous places, were all part of this reaction of the public conscience to the alarming result of uncontrolled industrialism. The earlier attitude to the wonders of the mechanical inventions had changed to one of fear of the perhaps unavoidable but certainly attendant evils which the rapid accumulation of wealth had brought. The best of the men who had benefited from the new order were beginning to feel their responsibility. As one historian has said, "Those evils (i.e. of the factory system) were not most of them new evils. The peculiar feature of the Victorian Age was that it laid these social evils bare."³

We are an unimaginative race, and find it difficult to realize

¹ See above, p. 288.

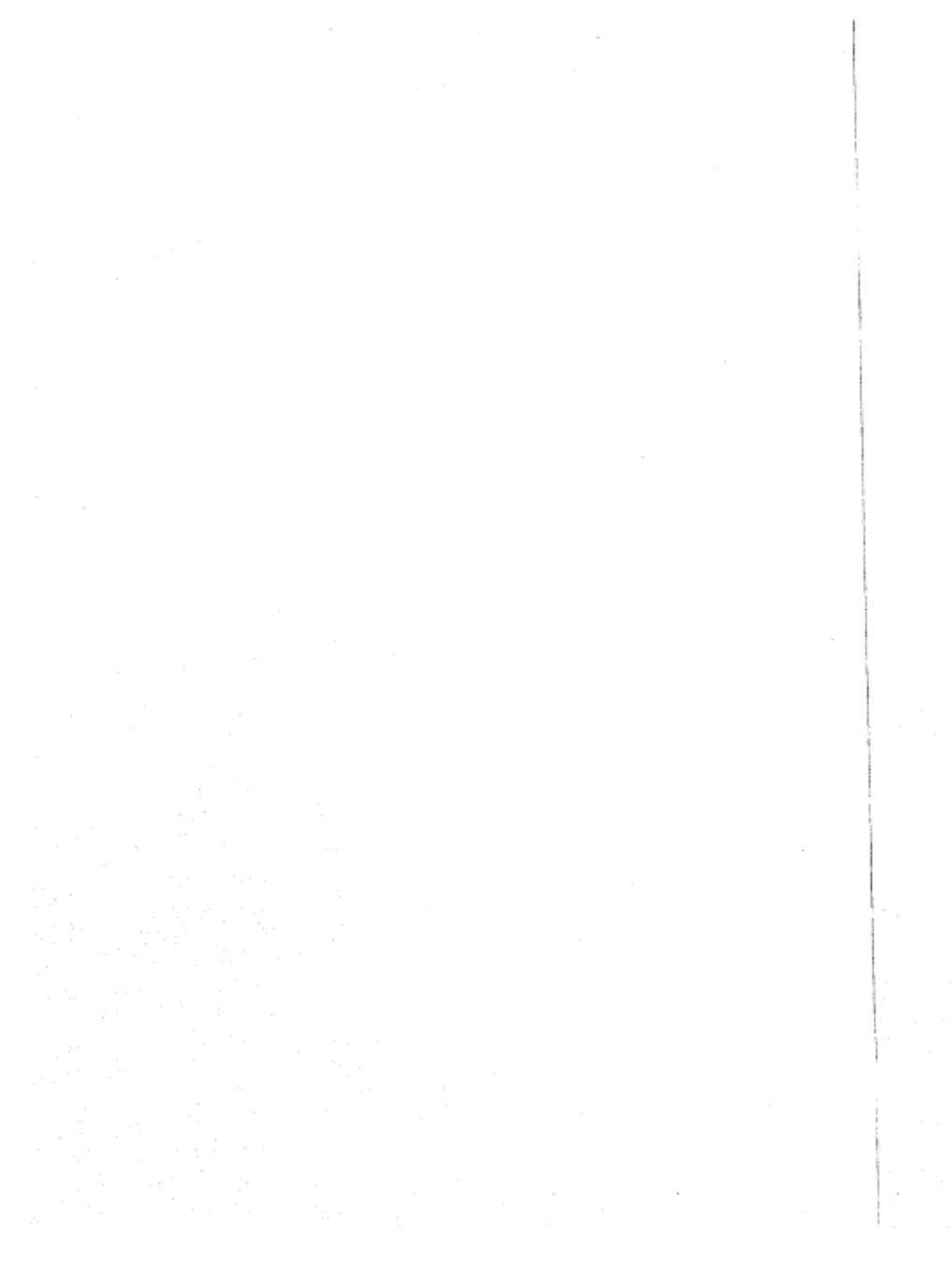
² House of Commons, May 22, 1846.

³ Paper read to the Historical Society by H. D. Henderson.



II. SIR THOMAS POTTER

Mayor of Manchester 1838-1840
From a bust in the Manchester Town Hall



conditions with which we are not familiar. Engels, as we saw, remarked that Manchester, more than most towns, was so arranged that the rich could go to and from their homes to their places of business without passing through the streets where the poor lived.¹ The cholera epidemic of the 'thirties brought home to the thoughtful leading citizens of Manchester who had been members of the Board of Health facts about the lives of the working classes that they had never had to face before. When they, ordinary, kindly, humane people, saw the appalling housing conditions under which their fellow citizens were living, it was not merely the fear of another epidemic—although this doubtless had some force—that set them thinking of reform. "The ordinary man will readily concede to instances what he would often violently deny to principles."² The troublous years of the early 'forties, with their "turnouts," leading often to riots, their large Chartist demonstrations which articulated the demands of the working classes more coherently than before, did not merely antagonize the more thoughtful of the middle classes. They forced them to think.

For many years there was no political opposition in the Council, for the Conservative party, after its defeat over the validity of the charter, abstained as a party from municipal affairs. This enabled the Whig Council to go ahead fast in those early years, but it brought certain disadvantages. Neither party ever had to define its attitude to municipal questions. The first opponents of the Whig councillors fought on the unimaginative platform of all Rate-payers' Associations, that of economy, and when the Conservative party officially came out in opposition most of the fundamental questions had been settled piecemeal and generally accepted.

Up to 1890 the Liberals were in a majority.³ That year the Conservatives had a slight advantage, which increased so that, with the brief exception of the year 1919, they have been in control for the last half century. Neither party ever used their majority to run the Council on party lines. There were Conservative mayors

¹ See above, p. 22.

² "Local Legislation," by I. G. Gibbon, *Journal of Public Administration*, July 1925.

³ The Liberal Party, which brought the Council into being, and dominated it for more than fifty years, has now only 22 out of a total of 140 members. There are 63 Conservatives, 52 Labour and 3 Independents. In 1931 it entered into an election pact with the Conservatives, and although that has now been broken, no Liberal has since succeeded in a three-cornered election.

and chairmen of committees during the Liberal majority, and Liberal and Labour Lord Mayors and chairmen of committees during the Conservative ascendancy. Whether this has been an advantage to the city is doubted by some, who find in those Councils which are run on party lines, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, and the L.C.C., a greater sense of responsibility, both in office and in opposition than can exist in Manchester, where the chairman of a committee may be and nowadays usually is of a different party from that of the deputy-chairman, and often of the majority of the members of the committee. By following this non-party line—also in the election of aldermen and the Lord Mayor—the Council has benefited by having had the advantage of chairmen who would never have been elected under a system of strict party control. On the other hand, it has meant that no party has produced for the public a clear-cut programme for which it has fought at elections, and to which it has worked in the Council.

The achievements of the first ten years are all the more remarkable when we remember that those years were years of financial crisis, falling wages, strikes, "the hungry forties," and a business depression which lasted until 1850. To-day such conditions would be made an excuse for curbing instead of extending municipal activities, but then markets were purchased, improvements made in the city, waterworks acquired,¹ owners of back-to-back houses made to construct privies, and builders of new houses made to submit to stricter regulations than had ever before been known. From 1850 to 1860 prosperity reigned, and the latter year is sometimes described as the peak of prosperity in the cotton industry. In spite of the depression caused by the cotton famine, 1861-64, trade recovered and was good until the slump of 1879. Before the shadow caused by the cotton famine had passed away in 1864 Manchester began to plan her new Town Hall. It was started in 1868 and opened in 1877. It cost £1,000,000, and was planned on a much larger scale than was necessary for the needs of the moment. It sufficed, in spite of all the extensions of the city and the additions of new departments, until 1923, although by then some of the departments had had to be accommodated outside its walls. Whatever we may think of the style of architecture—which was the fashionable style of the time—and its suitability for an administra-

¹ Manchester was one of the earliest municipalities to have its own water supply.

tive building rather than for a cathedral, it expresses the spirit of mid-Victorian Manchester and its belief in its future. Those who planned it must have felt that there was no limit to the growth of the city in riches or in population. That great mass in Albert Square, blackened by smoke, personifies the satisfaction of men in the present and their indomitable faith in the future.

Since Manchester was made a bishopric in 1847 there have been periodical suggestions that a cathedral should be substituted for the old Collegiate Church. Perhaps the reason that this has come to nothing is that the Town Hall, fashioned like a cathedral, may have seemed a more satisfactory expression of the spirit of the town. But although the Council was prepared to spend such a large sum for a magnificent building, that is after all these years still the most striking in the city, and although they saw to it that, unlike the other good buildings, its setting should be adequate, they were not prepared to spend money on a main drainage scheme. This sense of values seems to us now somewhat perverted, but we must remember that at that date the Council was only representative of the middle class, and the middle class suffered much less from the insanitary state of the city than did the working class.

By 1865 most of the original leaders of the Council had gone—Alderman Neild died suddenly at a committee meeting in 1864, Sir Elkanah Armitage retired the following year, and although Abel Heywood remained for another thirty years¹ the newer members of the Council were not of the same quality as the earlier ones. Even if their conception of social legislation was that of the successful business man of the time, those early leaders were entirely disinterested. They were too rich to mind about the rates for themselves, too unchallenged in their wards—even those who were councillors—to have to pay attention to the “economists.” They were able to pursue with very little opposition their ideas of how the city should be improved. But the activities of the Council under their control gradually aroused the opposition of vested interests, property owners,² brewers,³ etc., and these, with an in-

¹ He died August 19, 1893.

² By its insistence upon separate privies for each house.

³ The Police Act of 1844, section 203, had enforced the closing of public-houses during certain hours on Sunday.

creasing number of shopkeepers, began to enter the Council in order to safeguard their interests. Many of the leading business men also came in, but it could perhaps hardly have been expected that the enthusiasm of the pioneers should continue.

This change mattered less in the 'fifties and 'sixties, as those years found Sir Joseph Heron in his zenith. It was then that his ascendancy in the Council was at its highest, and it compensated for the loss of the older men, and for any advantages that might have come from the clash of the party system. But in the years that followed his semi-retirement and then his death the Council seems to have broken up into a series of badly co-ordinated committees. There were several reasons for this, apart from the removal of the strong control of the Town Clerk. The city had been extended twice—in 1885 and 1890—and each time not only extra territory but extra councillors and officials had been brought in. The work had extended rapidly, and the administrative machinery of the Council had never been overhauled and fitted to its larger purpose. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, investigating municipal government, came to Manchester in the autumn of 1899. The following extracts from Mrs. Webb's diary show the impression made upon her.

"The Manchester Town Council turns out to be no better than that of Leeds. The most marked feature is the way in which the magnitude and importance of its work has outgrown its organization. The different parts of the machine are out of joint; it rumbles on in some sort of fashion because it is pushed along by outside pressure, but it is always breaking down in the efficiency of administration. The Council, judged by this fact, would seem to be inefficient or corrupt or both. The men running the organization are not a bad lot: one or two of the officials are distinctly able. But there is no head to the concern, no one who corresponds to a general manager of a railway company, still less to its paid chairman. The mayor elected for one year has all his time absorbed by public meetings, social functions, or routine administration: he is far more the ceremonial head of the city than the chief of the executive of the city government. The town clerk and his deputy are exclusively engaged in legal and parliamentary business; they spend most of their time in the lobbies of the House of Commons, in presenting the Corporation's case at L.G.B. inquiries, in preparing leases and drafting agreements or in submitting by-laws

to government departments. The suggestion that the town clerk of a great city like Manchester can be anything more than its solicitor and parliamentary agent—can fill the place of its chief executive officer is, as things are at present, an absurdity. . . . Some of the committees are dominated by persons who are grotesquely unfit. . . . In other cases the committee is run by a really able and upright man, but even he will pride himself on managing it 'as I should my own business'; he resents mightily any criticism of his policy or methods. In short, there is no body whose special business it is to see that all parts of the organization are co-ordinated and working to a common end. Friction and petty scandals, accusations and recriminations, dog the council's work. All this secretiveness and jealousy of control does not attain its object—if that be a quiet administrative life. . . . So far as we have made the acquaintance of the councillors there are none very good and none very bad. I have not picked out any who seem to be 'rotters.' The abler among them are all old men, a little gang of liberals who are still the salt of the council. The social status is predominantly lower middle class, a Tory solicitor and an I.L.P. journalist being the only men with any pretension to culture. The abler administrators have no pretension to ideas, hardly any to grammar—they are merely hard-headed shopkeepers divided in their mind between their desire to keep the rates down and their ambition to magnify the importance of Manchester as against other cities."¹ Such was the impression that the Manchester City Council made upon an able and experienced investigator at the end of the nineteenth century.

Twenty-five years later another observer, this time from within the Council, was struck by the lack of co-ordination between committees and the consequent petty jealousy of the respective chairmen, of the lack of proper reports submitted in time for the committees to read them, of the failure of the Town Clerk to draft resolutions or to get the Council out of a mess, and of the incompetence of many of the chairmen to present their case to the Council. Those committees who possessed able officials managed well. Referring to the Tramways Committee—as the Transport Committee was then called—the observer, who was not a member of it, writes: "The Engineer, McElroy, seems to be a thoroughly efficient

¹ *Methods of Social Study*, by S. and B. Webb, pp. 195-198.

and capable person, and is said to have the committee entirely under his thumb. The trams are accordingly, I believe, well run."

There seems little doubt that after the first forty years the Council passed through a difficult and unsatisfactory period, which lasted until after the war.

Apart from the new Labour members, the personnel was deteriorating, the work increasing and the administrative machinery badly out of gear. When the late Mr. Heath became Town Clerk in 1919 matters improved rapidly, and have continued to improve under the present Town Clerk and City Treasurer. Clear reports are issued, and the necessary resolutions drafted well before the Council meeting; briefs for the chairmen are always prepared by the officials of each committee.

But there are some things that no official, however able, can prevent. Throughout the century the number of leading business men attracted to Council work seems steadily to have decreased. The movement to the outskirts which we noticed even in 1838 had been accelerated as the city prospered and transport improved, and the smoke, though actually less, seemed more intolerable when attractive dwelling-houses were available farther out. "I do not live in Manchester now," said the Stipendiary in 1866; "no one does who is at all in a position to live out of it." The increasing exodus from the city, when the business of making money is finished, has carried with it an increasing lack of responsibility for those who are not "in a position to live out of it."

Meanwhile the abolition of the property qualification for councillors¹ was followed in 1894 by the first two Labour members,² and after a period of years by several more. After the war and the extension of the municipal franchise their number increased, although they have not yet formed a majority. Their coming, together with the removal of the disqualification of women,³ made the Council for the first time representative of the whole city. Apart from the fact that their advent coincided with a period of active social legislation, intensified after the war, their presence certainly quickened the imagination of the comfortable, middle-

¹ In 1882.

² J. E. Sutton in 1894 and F. Brocklehurst in 1897.

³ In 1907 women became eligible, and in 1908 Miss Margaret Ashton was elected for the Withington Ward. There are still only 7 women out of a council of 140.

class councillors and made them readier to vote for expenditure on public health, housing and education.

It was unfortunate that this gain should have to be offset by the loss to the Council of the leading business men. "Merchants and manufacturers," who formed more than half the Council in 1838, now provide nineteen out of a total of one hundred and forty, and whereas in 1838 a large number of the leading business men of the city were in the Council, now only one of the forty-two directors of the Chamber of Commerce is there.¹

With a turnover of more than £18,000,000, the Council needs the help which business men, accustomed to deal with large undertakings, can give, just as it needs in the administration of the social services the experience and outlook of the Labour members. An occasional appeal from the Chamber of Commerce not to increase the rates is all that that body contributes to the Council, although it is surely as important to the business men of 1938 as it was to their predecessors in 1838 that the city should be well governed. This decline of a sense of civic responsibility in the business community is one of the most depressing reflections that arises from our survey of the last hundred years.

The system of permanent chairmen—because unless there is a Standing Order to the contrary, or a strict party system, committees always re-elect a retiring chairman, even when he has become incompetent—was first attacked in 1890, when a resolution was passed making three years the limit for a chairmanship without the special sanction of the Council. This system only lasted for a few years, however, and the old one was restored in 1894.

In 1927 the three-year system was again introduced, and it is still in force. Although three years is perhaps too short a term to enable a chairman to become familiar with the business, and five years might be better, the system has undoubtedly proved to have more advantages than disadvantages. It enables comparatively junior members to hold office, instead of having to wait for "dead men's shoes," and also ensures that, as an increasing number of members of the committee "pass through the chair," the committees become better informed and more responsible. It also does

¹ This is Alderman Sir Noton Barclay who has been on the Council since 1917 and was Lord Mayor 1929-30.

away with the domination of a committee by an old chairman of long service, who sometimes treated the committee with scant consideration. On the other hand, it makes life more difficult for the chief official, who has to accommodate himself to a new chairman just as he has become accustomed to the departing one. There is, however, some compensation for this in the increase of his power. He now, alone, is responsible for continuity of policy.

There are few echoes of municipal corruption in the last hundred years. On one or two occasions a member of the Council has retired after charges against him had been investigated by a committee of the Council. Charges against a Health Committee were inquired into by a committee under a K.C. and dismissed.¹ Charges of bribery brought by Mr. Norbury Williams against ex-officials and the Chairman of the Gas Committee were never substantiated.² Although there were occasional cases of individuals who used their knowledge acquired as members of the Improvement Committee to buy land that was afterwards bought by the Corporation, it was never done on a scale to justify an inquiry by a Council that had shown itself jealous of its reputation for financial probity.

We have been struck in our survey of the century by the important part played by outside voluntary associations in the work of the Council. The Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association for more than fifty years exercised considerable influence over the Council in matters of health and open spaces. Ratepayers' associations had shorter lives. We find them being formed to oppose a particular item of expenditure, sending memorials to the Council, sponsoring candidates at elections and then dying out. No organization can maintain enthusiasm for long on a purely negative policy of cutting down expenditure. Property owners' associations have lasted longer—they have definite interests to protect—and they can always count on the support of the ratepayers' association of the moment.

The Manchester and Salford Women's Citizens Association³ aimed at building up a membership in all wards of the two cities in order to influence policy, but since elections have been increasingly fought on party lines—and the association is non-party—its influence has depended more on the contact between its central committee and the members of the Council. Although it has, in

¹ 1886.

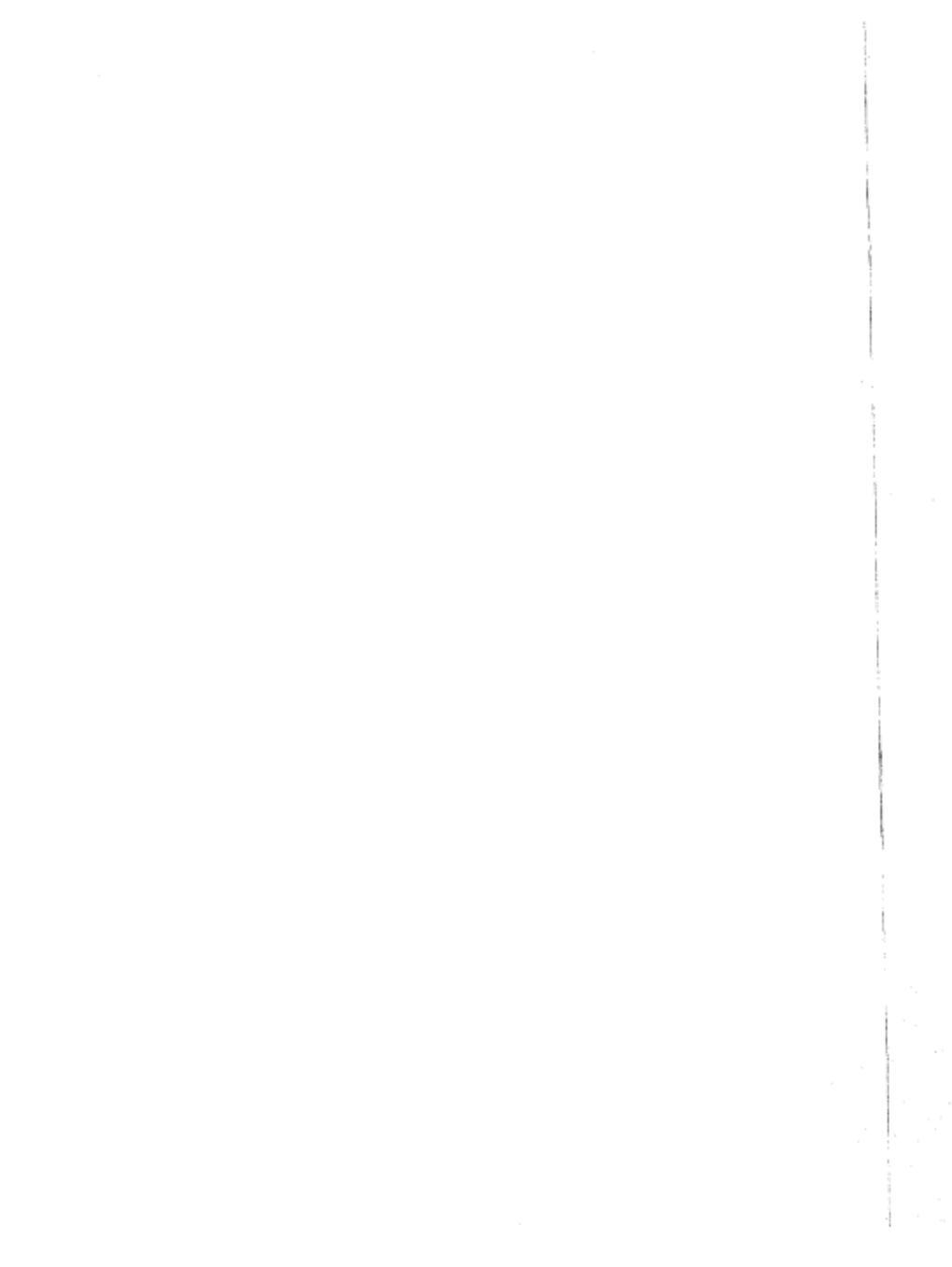
² 1890.

³ Founded January 1914.



MR. ALDERMAN JOSEPH GRIME

Lord Mayor of Manchester 1938



conjunction with other women's societies, managed to get some of its policies accepted, it has never exercised as much influence as the Sanitary Association.

The Council started off with vision and imagination shown in the early private Acts, but since then it has only shown those two qualities twice. The first was when in years of bad trade the Council realized the possibilities of the Ship Canal, and came to its rescue.¹ The second was when, in 1926, it bought the Wythenshawe estate, planning it on the lines not merely of a municipal housing estate, but on those of a satellite garden town. But it lost Trafford Park, and its forty years' discussion about the use of the Infirmary site is not yet ended. It has neither the advantages nor the disadvantages of the party system. If the Council were run on the strict party system with chairmanships confined to members of the party in power, a definite policy could be followed with an opposition which could criticize effectively. If, on the other hand, elections were not run on party lines—though attempts so far made have been unsuccessful—then a General Purposes Committee, consisting of the chairmen of committees, could control the policy of the Council. In default of any other form of leadership, the Council has drifted into a position in which financial considerations are allowed to dominate it. However important these are, once finance becomes the master, instead of the servant of policy, all hope of imagination and vision disappear. It is true that rateable value has "wobbled" since 1930. This year, 1937, it is £6,661,545 which, although £33,000 less than in 1935, is higher by £107,000 than it was in 1930.² Manchester is not a poor city. Its rateable value per head of the population, £8 19s. 1d., is much higher than the average. It is higher than Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol, Sheffield, and Leeds. The only county boroughs that exceed it are seven seaside towns, two cathedral cities and Oxford and Croydon. Manchester used to be proud of leading the country in municipal affairs; to-day she is satisfied to rest on her oars. Perhaps the centenary year, with rateable value again on the up-grade, will inspire the citizens with courage to go ahead with the task of re-moulding Manchester nearer to their hearts' desire.

¹ See above, p. 387.

² See table on p. 159.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MUNICIPAL SERVICE THROUGH THE CENTURY

By 1838 the administration of the township of Manchester and most of the out-townships which made up the borough, primitive though it seems to us now, had already outgrown the first stage in local government when the work was done by unpaid, annually elected men, who had to serve under penalty of a fine. Although the custom still held for the Borough Reeve and Constables, they had long become decorative rather than executive officials. The Deputy Constable appointed annually, but actually reappointed each year, was the paid official in charge of the Day Police, and the Police and Improvement Commissioners had a long list of salaried officials, Comptroller, Superintendent of Gas Works, Surveyor, etc., who worked under their direction. In the same way the Churchwardens and Overseers had their paid clerk or comptroller as he was sometimes called, with a staff of assistant overseers—relieving officers—and rate collectors, under him.¹ The elected Highway Surveyors, too, had an Assistant Surveyor as their paid official.

Theoretically the paid officials had no security of tenure; they were re-elected each year, but in fact, if satisfactory, they were re-elected. Few things bring home more forcibly the difference between those days and ours, than the fact that dishonesty on the part of the rate collectors was not unusual.

At the first meeting of the newly elected Council, December 15, 1838, Mr. Joseph Heron² was appointed Town Clerk, Mr. Thorpe Treasurer and Mr. Edward Herford Assistant to the Town Clerk. Legal officials were appointed later, and when the Police Commissioners transferred their powers³ they brought their officials

¹ From 1815 to 1910 the Lings family filled this office: George Lings, 1815-45, his son Thomas, 1845-78, and his son Arthur, 1878-1910. They were first-class officials, and it was Thomas Lings who was responsible for the Manchester Overseers Act of 1858, considerably in advance of the general law then, and indeed up to 1925, when it was superseded by the Rating and Valuation Act.

² He was knighted in 1869.

³ 1843.

with them. Mr. Thomas Wroe was continued in charge of the Gas Department, and Mr. Shorland, the Surveyor, became the first Surveyor under the Corporation.

Although the Treasurer was required to give the whole of his time to the work of the Corporation at a salary of £300, neither the Town Clerk nor the Surveyor was at first a full-time official. Sir Joseph Heron was a partner in a private firm of solicitors, and was paid by fees until 1841, when a fixed salary of £1,000 was given in return for two-thirds of his time being devoted to Corporation business. In 1846 this was raised to £1,500 on condition that he gave all his time to the work.¹ In 1860, in spite of considerable opposition which persisted for nearly two years and coloured the elections, his salary was increased to £2,000.

The Surveyor was made a full-time official in 1845, and his salary raised to £750.

Manchester was fortunate in her first Town Clerk. Son of a merchant, and under thirty at the time of his appointment, he was already known to some of the leading members of the Council. Six years before he had served as honorary secretary to the Special Board of Health, which was set up to combat the cholera epidemic. He also served on the committee to work for the charter. Still "we are told that he was such a handsome man in appearance, and such a gay young spark withal, that he enacted misgiving in the minds of the 'potent, grave and reverend seigneurs' . . . who assembled in the Council Chamber . . . he, with handsome, smiling face and confident though respectful manner, elegantly dressed, and with the fastidiousness of a well-bred man of the world; they, as plain, practical men, looking furtively upon what they in their rigid integrity feared might be signs of frivolity in one whom they wished to trust implicitly; one alderman audibly making the remark to his neighbour that it would never do to appoint¹ such a swell,' and both shaking their wise old heads as they glanced at the kid gloves, tight boots, glossy curls, and all the adornments and graces of a ladies' man."²

This outward appearance, so different from that of the typical business man, did not signify a frivolous or superficial nature. Great ability in the administrative sphere as well as in the legal,

¹ He was also made Registrar of the Borough Court of Record.

² *Manchester Faces and Places*, January 10, 1890.

and a high ideal of municipal government, was combined with wider interests and a love of the arts. He possessed wit, a capacity for public speaking, and a courteous and attractive manner. He rapidly became not only the leader of the Council and the inspirer of its actions, but the most distinguished Town Clerk in the country, to whom foreign inquirers into English municipal institutions were referred by the Government. During the forty years that he was Town Clerk he laid the foundations of Manchester's municipal government by means of private Acts which gave powers far in advance of general legislation, some parts of which are still in use.¹

"A consummate ruler of men,"² he grew to dominate the Council, frequently intervening in the debate; on one occasion with "Councillor X, you know nothing about this matter. Please sit down," upon which the surprised member sat down—rumour has it—in the coal scuttle! On another occasion an angry councillor exclaimed, "What right have you to speak? What ward do you represent?" "A larger ward than yours, sir," said the Town Clerk. "I represent the entire city."

A bachelor until the age of seventy-one, he married Mrs. Willert,³ two years after her husband, Alderman Willert, who was one of the original and most valued members of the Council, died. For many years the three had been great friends, spending their holidays abroad together. Alderman Willert presented to the City Council⁴ the full-length portrait of Sir Joseph Heron which hangs in the Council Chamber. He died December 1889, just before his eightieth birthday, having been consultant Town Clerk since 1877.

Although the first few years of the new Council's life were dominated by the legal cases concerned with the dispute over the validity of the Charter, Sir Joseph Heron never conceived his office as mainly, or even as primarily, that of legal adviser. Reporting to the Council on his duties during the first two years, he classified these under "Ordinary and Extraordinary." Under the former he put, "To prepare resolutions and reports for the Committees, and to carry out all resolutions and orders of such Committees."

¹ The Police Act of 1844 and the Manchester Improvement Act of 1851.

² *Manchester City News*, January 4, 1890.

³ 1881. She died at the age of ninety-three in 1899.

⁴ In 1870. In 1878 the bust of Sir Joseph Heron which stands outside the great hall was presented to the Council by Alderman King.

Under "Extraordinary" came the legal and parliamentary business. He considered himself responsible for the whole of the work of the Corporation, even when there were other officials in charge of the different departments.

Manchester lost this view of the Town Clerk's position when they appointed as Sir Joseph Heron's successor Mr. (later Sir) William Talbot. He had been Deputy Town Clerk for twenty-three years, but although an excellent lawyer he seemed to have the defects that sometimes go with the legal mind. He had none of Sir Joseph Heron's capacity for quick decisions,¹ and sometimes appeared weak and hesitating. He had not his predecessor's dominant personality, nor his control of policy, and the Council, growing larger with each extension of the city, and taking on more and more duties, became less of a unity under a single control and more a collection of independent committees.

The position of the Town Clerk to-day is different from what it was when Sir Joseph Heron retired. He is the chief official, and as such receives the highest salary. He is there for consultation with officials and members of the Council, but he is not held responsible by the Council, and does not consider himself responsible, for the work of each department of the Corporation. He does not even keep the minutes of every committee, and proposals that he should do so are resisted by some departments, who are afraid that this might lead to undue control of their affairs. Some authorities hold that the Town Clerk should approximate more to the General Manager of a business. In towns of a certain size, when the Town Clerk has the necessary qualifications and personality, he does in fact though not in theory "manage" the Council's affairs, but this has not been the case in Manchester since the days of Sir Joseph Heron, when the city was half the size that it is to-day, and when its work was much more circumscribed.

Manchester was behind other towns—particularly Liverpool²—in the appointment of a Medical Officer of Health. It was not until

¹ An official, now retired, who remembered Sir Joseph Heron, tells how, when asked to come to a committee as his advice was wanted, he would stroll in smoking a cigar and, balancing himself on the edge of a table, would listen to the chairman's explanation of the difficulty, and then say, "You must do so and so." If a member made any objection he would wave it aside, repeat his instructions and then leave the room.

² Liverpool appointed a Medical Officer of Health in 1846.

1868, and after much pressure by the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, that Dr. John Leigh was appointed. A doctor, with a taste for literature which found vent in his official reports, he was also one of the secretaries of the committee that brought the Free Library into being.¹ He was a sensitive and humane man, who strove hard with an often unsympathetic Council to improve the appalling sanitary and housing conditions which he felt caused so much of the often excessive drunkenness of the time. He did much, helped by the propaganda of the Sanitary Association, to rouse the conscience of the public about the state of the city and, as a corollary, the enmity of those whose interests were threatened. The policy of the Health Committee was often obstructed, and a proposal to increase his salary² brought violent attacks from property owners, which were, however, unsuccessful.

The first women to be employed by the Corporation were library assistants in 1871, and then only, we regret to say, because of a shortage of suitable men. However, a year after the experiment had been initiated, fourteen were employed, and the Committee reported that they "had proved their fitness."

It was a long time before the Council provided for the retirement of its officials, who therefore continued in its service until death, a system which did not make for efficiency. In the ranks of the higher officials, the problem was solved by making them "Consultants." Thus in 1877 Sir Joseph Heron, having held office for nearly forty years, and feeling the effects of a severe illness, was made Consulting Town Clerk at his existing salary £2,500.³ Mr. Talbot, although acting as Town Clerk, for Sir Joseph spent most of his winters abroad, was still called Deputy Town Clerk until Sir Joseph's death. In the fullness of time, in other words, when Sir William Talbot was seventy-nine,⁴ he intimated his readiness to resign and to accept a consultative post. For nine years, until his death, he was "consulting solicitor" at a salary of £1,000 a year.

The same procedure enabled the Treasurer, Mr. Martin, at the advanced age of eighty-three,⁵ to be appointed Consulting Treasurer, and as late as 1919 Mr. Rook, who had been Superintendent of the Sanitary Department for many years, was made "Consulting Superintendent" when he was eighty-four.

¹ 1851.

² April 1875.

³ In 1885 this was reduced to £1,500.

⁴ 1910.

⁵ 1893.

The Corporation first tackled the question of superannuation in 1891. By a private Act of that year it established a Thrift Fund for all officials earning more than 30s. a week.¹ They were to contribute $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent and the Corporation $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of their salaries, and on reaching the age of sixty-five, or on becoming incapacitated for service, the contributor would receive a lump sum consisting of his contributions and those of the Corporation. The scheme was compulsory for new members, and voluntary for existing ones, but it contained no provisions for compulsory retirement. When in 1913 the Council proposed to introduce a proper pension scheme with compulsory retirement, the Ratepayers and Property Owners' Association opposed it on the ground of cost. The war put an end to any further attempt, and it was not until 1920,² when teachers had been added to police and other municipal employees entitled to pensions, and subject to compulsory retirement, that the Corporation employees were put in the same position.

But a satisfactory end to a municipal career was not more important than a satisfactory beginning or than satisfactory conditions of service, including salaries and promotion. Although these questions were continually occupying the minds of the councillors—in 1872 Alderman Grundy spoke of the unsatisfactory method, or lack of method, by which advances in salaries were given—nothing was done until the beginning of the twentieth century. The continuing interest then taken in these questions was due largely to the Labour members. Since their advent on the Council attention had been called to the pay and conditions of service of the employees, and to the system of patronage then in force.

At a meeting of the Council in 1905 a resolution in favour of a minimum wage of 25s. a week for Corporation employees was moved by Councillor—later Alderman—Tom Fox, and carried. At the same meeting a special committee was appointed to consider terms and conditions of service and methods of appointment, and of promotion. This committee, whose labours eventually resulted in the grading and superannuation scheme now in force, made an interim report in 1907, when, amongst other proposals, it made the

¹ The Corporation felt that it would not be justified in making thrift compulsory on people earning less than 30s.

² The scheme came into force in 1921.

important recommendation "that entrance to the administrative service should be by open competitive examination." Many years—and the war—had come and gone before this proposal was adopted. A return in 1908 showed that of employees in the service of the Corporation, thirty-seven were related to heads of departments and eighty-six to aldermen and councillors, but an attempt by the present Alderman Jackson to prohibit the system by which applicants for posts brought a note from a councillor was heavily defeated. "Three voices were raised in favour of the resolution and the 'Noes' bellowed out like stage thunder."

No steps were taken to implement the recommendation of recruitment by examination for five years, and then, although the Council passed a resolution instructing the special committee to put it into effect, nothing more was heard of it until after the war. In 1922 the first examination was held for boys and girls, between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. The Education Department conducts the examination, which is highly competitive, and which succeeds in drawing much excellent material into the Corporation's service. Once in, further study on the part of the young men and women is encouraged. The Corporation pays the fees at the University or College of Technology for courses approved by the heads of departments. The University provides an evening degree course in commerce and administration, and it is largely attended by members of the Corporation's staff, who combine the theoretical study of public administration, finance and local government at night with their practical experience of it by day. There are now sixty holders of this degree in the municipal service.

The complete grading scheme was finally settled after consultation with representatives of the staff, and came into force in 1923. The main principles of the scheme are competitive examination for entry, probationary period, promotion by merit, minimum and maximum salaries for the different grades. Increases of salaries over £535 still have to come before the Council once a year, after having been considered by the Establishment Committee. The Council is seldom at its best when discussing salaries, largely owing to the fact that so many of its members are themselves earning less than many of their employees, and do not realize the importance of attracting—and keeping—the best possible officials. So long as the outside world rewards some posts more highly than

others, so long must the Corporation do the same if it is to obtain efficient service.

Although theoretically women are on an equality with men in the municipal service, and there is equal pay under the grading scheme and no marriage bar, there is a tendency there, as in private business, for the men to get the more interesting and responsible posts. There is as yet no woman head of a department on the administrative side.

Recruitment by examination has immensely improved the personnel of the administrative staff. The criticism that is still made is that by having only recruitment for juniors, the Corporation is missing those able boys and girls who stay at school and, by means of scholarships, go to the university for a full-time day course. At present it is only officials who possess technical qualifications, legal, medical, engineering, architects, etc., who can enter the municipal service after a university education. If some of the administrative posts were recruited by an examination at twenty-one for graduates, for which both those within the service and those just down from the university, would be eligible, the Corporation would get the advantage of both types of training. There would be difficulties, though not, we feel, insuperable ones, in devising an examination to give equal chances to those who left school at sixteen, and who had kept up their studies by attendance at evening university courses, and those who had remained at school until eighteen, and had then gone to a day course at a university. The experience that comes from practical work combined with the qualities necessary to undertake an evening degree course has shown that the part-time evening students can more than hold their own with the full-time day students.

Another way of enabling the Corporation to get the advantages that come from full-time attendance at a university with the greater opportunities of contact with lecturers and fellow-students, and more time for reading, would be for the Education Committee to offer some of its university scholarships to men and women already in the Corporation service—on the analogy of the scholarships awarded for university courses at the College of Technology. The Corporation would have to undertake to find a post for the scholar again at the end of the three years, but in a service of the size of Manchester's that should not be difficult, and such scholars,

assuming that they were well selected, should be of increased value to the Corporation as a result of their university career.

The question of wages, hours and conditions of service for the workmen in the employment of the Corporation has been considered at various times, but although the principle of a minimum wage of 25s. a week was secured in 1905, a forty-eight hour week was not introduced until 1916. Apart from these regulations, each committee made its own arrangements until Whitley, or Joint Industrial Councils were set up after the war for local authorities and their employees in Lancashire and Cheshire. These Councils, which consist of representatives of both sides, settle wages, hours, holidays, and working conditions generally for manual workers in the trading and also in the non-trading departments of the Corporations. The only workmen outside these Councils are those under trade agreements, i.e. building trade operatives, engineers, etc., who form only 5 per cent of the Corporation workmen in Manchester.

The question of patronage in the recruitment of workmen, particularly of unskilled labour, was not settled so satisfactorily as in the case of the administrative employees, and in spite of a standing order designed to prevent it the majority of the departments selected many of their men from those sent with a note or recommendation from a councillor. In 1930 an Employment Bureau was set up in the Town Hall under a special officer, and all the departments were supposed to engage their workmen through it. After two years it fell a victim to the Special Expenditure Committee's desire to economize, and the various departments were instructed to engage their labour through the ordinary Labour Exchanges, where a section specializes in selecting workers for the Corporation. It is safe to say that patronage is not yet eliminated. Even when the Bureau was working councillors could send a man with a note to the officer in charge, and under the present system the official in the Corporation's department can ask the Employment Exchange for a particular man who may have brought him a recommendation from a member of his committee. Although no official would engage an unsuitable man, even if he was recommended by a councillor, he cannot be blamed if, urged by a councillor to take on a certain man, he feels that for unskilled work one man is as good as another. The fact that one man should get

a job rather than another, not because he is better qualified nor even because his need for work is greater, but simply because he happens to be a friend—or a political supporter—of a member of the Council, does not offend the conscience of the Council.

When we compare the municipal service in 1838 with that of to-day, both in its quality and in the variety and complexity of its work, we find perhaps the greatest advance of all the advances during the century.

A hundred years ago the only citizens of Manchester who came into contact with any of their officials more than the once a year when they paid their rates were those who broke the law or those who became destitute, a small proportion of the population. To-day the only citizens, including in that term school children, who do not come into relation with a municipal official almost every day of their lives—even if it is only to buy a ticket on the tram or to benefit by the policeman's regulation of the traffic—are a small minority of the population. The success of teachers, health visitors, tram and bus guards, police, library attendants, rate collectors, doctors, relieving officers, sanitary inspectors, etc., depends not only upon their technical qualifications but upon their capacity to make contacts with ordinary members of the public. Parliament passes Acts and leaves local authorities to administer them. The fact that, even with the increasing "interference" of social legislation, these laws are administered with so little friction is the greatest tribute that can be paid to an administrative creation of the last hundred years, every bit as important, though not so fully recognized, as the creation of the national civil service.

These two branches of the public service are often compared, but in many respects they are fundamentally different. The first difference we have mentioned above. With the exception of the officials of the Post Office, the Employment Exchanges, and the Unemployment Assistance Board, the national civil servants do not come into contact with the ordinary citizen as do the municipal officials. Another difference is that the head officials, the Town Clerk, Medical Officer of Health, Director of Education, etc., are not anonymous as are the permanent heads of the departments of State. Few members of the Manchester public could tell you the name of the Permanent Secretary of the

Ministry of Health, although many would know that Sir Kingsley Wood is the Minister. On the other hand, for the number of Manchester citizens who could tell you the name of the Chairman of the Education Committee, there are thousands who know the name of the Director of Education. In local government all communications from the different departments to the public are signed by the chief official.¹

Although the chief official accepts full responsibility for all acts of his staff, neither the Council nor the public hold the chairman of the committee responsible, and complaints from the public might go to him or might just as easily go direct to the chief official. A few years ago a member of the Council who felt that he had a right to see a report which, he alleged, the then Director of Education had withheld, moved in the Council a vote of censure, not on the Chairman of the Education Committee but on the Director. Such a situation is, of course, impossible in the case of civil servants, for the Minister is responsible in the eyes of Parliament and of the country for all the acts of his department.

The anonymity of the national civil servant is essential to the working of the system. He has to advise impartially politicians of first one party and then of another. Unless full responsibility for decisions and actions is vested in the political head—the Minister—this impartiality would be endangered. The Minister, a member of a party with a declared policy, which it has been returned to carry out, will make proposals for legislation, and it is the civil servant's duty to examine and advise on them. If the Minister refuses his advice, then the civil servant must loyally carry out the policy even if he disapproves of it.

In local government the position is different. The Council does not, except when it applies for powers under private Acts, initiate legislation. Its duty is to administer laws passed by Parliament. There is, however, great scope for differences in administration—even when the Acts are compulsory and not permissive—and lack of uniformity in this respect, and differences in the expenditure of different localities, are among the most striking features of English local government. The work of the trading committees, too, is

¹ In the recent inquiry into the typhoid epidemic in Croydon, no member of the Council was called, and this was justified on the ground that the Council had agreed to all the proposals made by the officials.



IV. MR. F. E. WARRECKER HOWELL

Town Clerk of Manchester 1938

Photo Guttenberg



not so much in carrying out Acts of Parliament as in managing big business undertakings.

In Manchester, where the party system is not in force and the policy of a committee remains the same whether under a Labour or under a Conservative chairman, the official plays a far bigger part in making the policy of his committee than does the civil servant in the policy of his department. With few exceptions the official, after consultation with the chairman, formulates proposals and brings them before the committee, which discusses them, may or may not make alterations in them and then takes the responsibility for them. There have been cases in the past when a chairman of long standing has dominated both the committee and the official, sometimes, but rarely, to the advantage of the work, but this cannot happen under three-year chairmanships. On the contrary, there are now more members of the committee who are well informed, and the chairman is not the only one to be considered. It is the business of the official to study the idiosyncrasies of all the members; he does not expect the chairman to bear the brunt of the discussion in committee, he will explain the proposals himself. Once through the committee it is, of course, the chairman's job to get the report through the Council. The civil servant, on the other hand, has to deal with his Minister, not with the Cabinet.

Since the chairman changes every three years, the official alone has the necessary knowledge of complicated matters to plan a wise and continuous line of development.

If we are reluctantly led to the conclusion that—apart from the benefits which come from the broadening of the composition of the Council by the election of Labour members and of women—its personnel is on the average, with outstanding exceptions, inferior to what it was a hundred years ago, the contrary is true of the municipal service—apart from Sir Joseph Heron, who for fifty years was the leading Town Clerk in England.

The contrast between the civil service staffs of the city in 1838 and 1938 is striking. In 1838 there were very few whole-time officials. In 1938 there are thousands, and they include highly trained men and women who devote themselves to all kinds of different technical problems—doctors, mechanical and civil engineers; engineers who specialize in gas, water, electricity and trans-

port problems; lawyers and accountants, teachers and, on the staff of the College of Technology, university professors.

Manchester has never before possessed such a fine body of able officials who combine incorruptibility, enthusiasm and energy with a sympathetic understanding of the lives and problems of the ordinary citizens. It has been said of the national civil servants that if they were left to govern the country alone for six months, there would not be enough lamp-posts in Whitehall on which to hang the culprits. This could never be said—even in jest—of Manchester's municipal servants. So long as they receive fair treatment and loyal support from the Council, they will continue to serve the city with increasing efficiency.

CHAPTER XIX

PROBLEMS OF THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS

WE have traced the growth of Manchester from a collection of townships, contiguous to one another and united by community of interests but separate in government, to the city of to-day. An area nearly six times as large as the original borough and containing more than three times the population is now governed by a single authority, not only the one authority for the area, but for all the functions that were formerly exercised by numerous different governing bodies. We have seen the city dealing with the problems of police, sanitation, public health, education, poor law relief, and the municipal provision of water, gas, electricity, markets and transport. These were the problems that all the towns were tackling during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sometimes Manchester led, sometimes she followed, but when we compare the conditions of life in the city a hundred years ago with those of to-day, we need not be ashamed of the achievement. If democracy works slowly, its foundations are securely laid. Never once do we find that a step was taken backwards. Progress was uneven but, as even Mrs. Sidney Webb said, after a not too flattering review of the Council, "it has its head in the right direction."

Many of the problems that emerged during the first hundred years have actually been solved. The city now has a pure water supply, a good main drainage system; supplies of gas and electricity are cheap and ample; infectious diseases are scientifically controlled. Many other problems are in process of solution, those connected with transport, housing, education and public health. In all these fields immense progress has been made; at least we know what should be done, even if we still lack the determination to complete the task in the best possible way.

But other problems remain, which will have to be solved in the next hundred years. Chief among these is the problem of town planning. Manchester to-day, like our other great industrial cities, is a disgrace to civilization. She has grown up mean, unplanned,

and so dirty and unattractive as hardly to be fit for human habitation.

What are the fundamentals of well-planned life for urban workers? Clearly, that home and factory or office should be in pleasant places and close to one another. So far as possible, daily transport from home to place of work should be abolished. On the other hand, week-end transport and holiday transport should be increased. We shall probably all have a two-day week-end before long, and the ideal is that every family should be able to get easily to Blackpool or Derbyshire or the Lake District.

There are two schools of thought as to how this can be achieved; by centralizing or by decentralizing. The most ambitious plan for centralization is the ten-year reconstruction plan for Moscow. Five million people are to be housed in a relatively small area, the houses being five to ten stories high. Round the city is to be a forest belt five miles deep, with no buildings except country clubs. The city is designed on a spider's web plan, with broad radial roads and radial electric railways by which it is hoped to get the whole population out of the town on holidays.

On the other hand, most town planners in England are in favour of decentralization. Not only town planners, but traffic experts, regard London as the outstanding example of grossly wasteful and uneconomic planning. Town planners advocate the garden city—Letchworth or Welwyn—where men live within a few minutes' walk of their factory and in close contact with the country.

What is the right line of development in Manchester? For many reasons it is difficult to forecast its future, but whether there should be more Wythenshawes or whether industry should still be encouraged to settle in the centre of the city—which means a certain amount of residential property there also—are problems that have not yet been faced. The central area is now being replanned and we hope that provision will be made for parkways right through the centre of the city out to the Cheshire plain and the Derbyshire hills. Not only would these add immensely to the amenities of the city, but they would enable masses of the population to get into the country at week-ends. We need a far-reaching regional plan for the future of the greater Manchester, one with courage and imagination.

Another serious handicap to good government is the lack of

local interest in municipal affairs. At present far too many citizens feel that they have done all that is required of them when they have paid their rates. If their interest is roused at election times sufficiently to take them to meetings, the questions which they put to candidates seldom deal with the big problems of the city, but with a better bus service for *themselves*, a maintenance allowance for *their* child, a reduction of the assessment of *their* house, etc.

This is probably due to the fact that Manchester is so large, and the problems of her government so complicated, that the ordinary ratepayer feels that he cannot understand them without spending more time and thought than he is able to give. It is difficult for him, too, to learn about municipal affairs. The only daily paper that gives a consecutive account of the monthly meetings of the City Council is the *Manchester Guardian*, and it can only devote two columns out of a hundred and forty to this subject. A hundred years ago, then a bi-weekly paper, it devoted two and a third columns out of thirty-six—and the same was true of the other papers. The *City News*, which was started in 1864, devoted itself primarily to municipal questions for seventy years, but rather faded out for want of support. It is making a gallant effort to revive itself, and it is still the only paper from which the interested citizen can get an idea of all the questions discussed by the Council. Small towns, on the other hand, all have their local papers, which report their local council meetings at considerable length.

But the problem of the size of Manchester may be automatically solved by the general decline of the population of the country. Even so, we feel that the question of areas remains.

The best area for the supply of water, electricity, gas, transport, higher education and hospitals has never been scientifically worked out. No one can deny that the present haphazard areas are not necessarily the best for most, if not all, of these services. But there is a further and in some respects a more urgent problem, and that is the necessity for spreading more widely the cost of the social services.

The fact that practically all those "who can in any way live out of Manchester" do so, means that the cost of providing for the population who remain in the city—those who need the social services most—falls upon those least able to bear the burden. The better-off citizens, just because they are better off and can afford

higher train or bus fares, or possess a motor car, live in semi-rural parts of the country, where rates are naturally low. Yet they are entirely dependent upon Manchester for their living. The area of north Cheshire and Derbyshire within a radius of twenty miles has become a dormitory for Manchester. Rateable value there is increased each year by new houses built for people from Manchester. Its prosperity is becoming more and more dependent upon that of the city, and yet its residents pay nothing towards the cost of it.

We do not suggest that people move out of Manchester in order to avoid the high rates, but because they want fresher air and more country surroundings than the city provides. But they make their living in Manchester, and if they want to have the best of both worlds, they should be prepared to pay for both worlds.

If that area came within the boundaries of a county of Manchester, the cost of running the city could be spread fairly over all who benefit from the good government of the city.

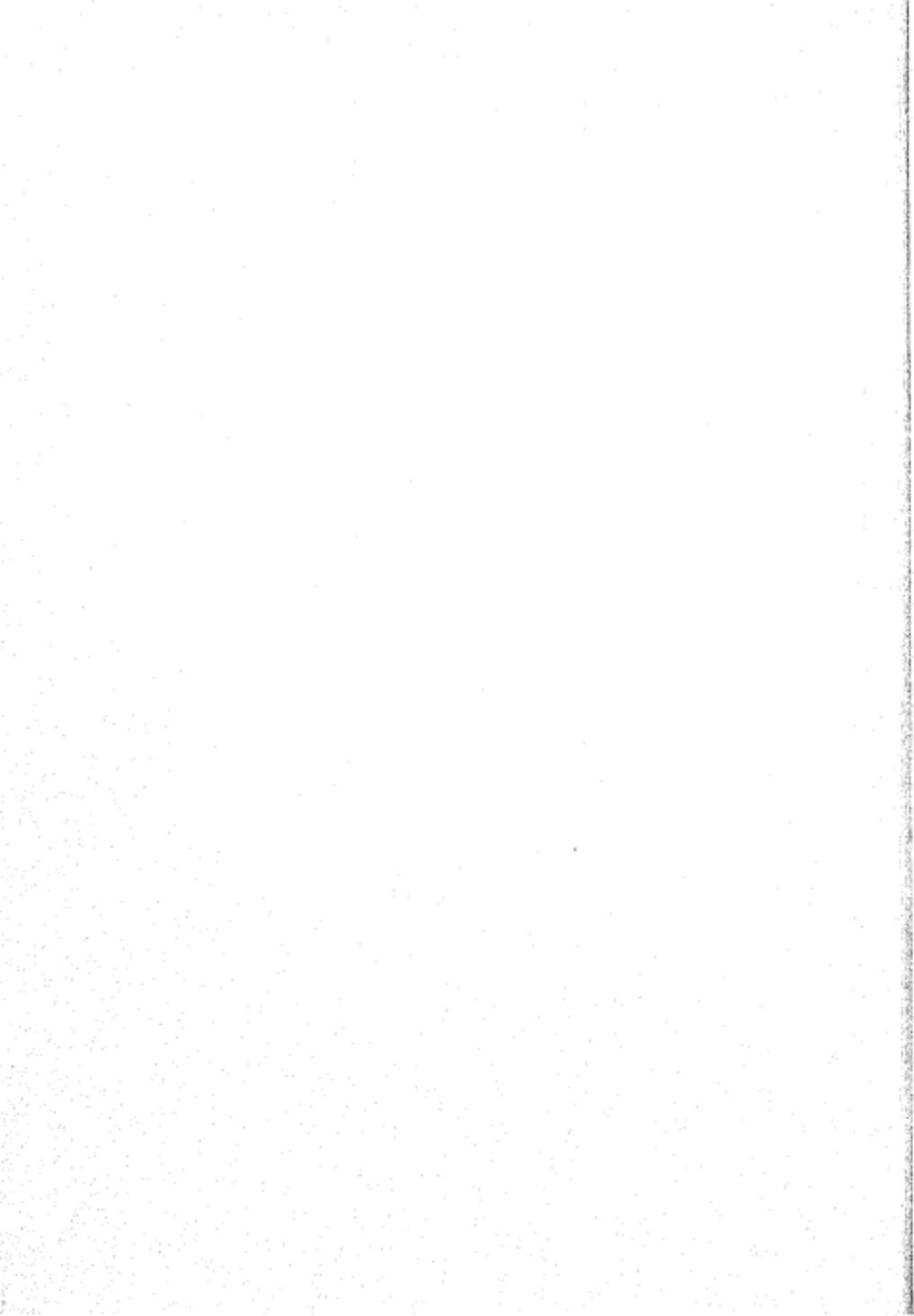
We realize the immense difficulties of the problem and that much study and inquiry is necessary before a solution can be found. We have only tried to indicate the existence of the problem, and the necessity for a solution.

In connection with the Centenary celebrations we shall hear much self-congratulation, and it is only right that on such an occasion we should look back with pride to what we have achieved in the hundred years. But we should only do this in order to brace ourselves to further effort. We should not forget that there are still thousands of citizens living in unhealthy and overcrowded houses; that still 37 per cent of the classes in our elementary schools have more than forty children in them; that there is no dental treatment yet provided for 40 per cent of the school children; that still many boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen are working excessively long hours, which make continued education impossible; that still more than twice as many babies die in Ancoats than in Didsbury, and that the maternal mortality rate for 1936 was above that of the country as a whole.

Great though the achievement has been, Manchester, like other towns, does not yet realize that the only true wealth of a city lies in its citizens, and that she should put the interests of the children first. With a smaller child population, we should surely aim at a

better quality. With the knowledge now at our disposal of nutrition, of fresh air and exercise, of early medical treatment, of care in adolescence, etc., Manchester could, if she liked, produce a generation of children whose quality would more than compensate for a reduction in their quantity.

A hundred years ago responsible citizens in Manchester set to work to procure a form of self government which has enabled succeeding generations to tackle the problems of urban life. The achievements of the past give hope for the future. If, with the much greater scientific and administrative knowledge of to-day, the remaining problems are tackled in the same spirit, Manchester should, long before the bi-centenary is reached, be a model city both in appearance and in the quality of her citizens.



APPENDIX I

THE HISTORY OF THE MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE¹

AMONGST the many articles that celebrated the centenary of local government, no mention was made of the development through the century of the municipal franchise. Yet, it also had a history not without interest.

The authors of the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act intended the franchise to be wider than that of the parliamentary franchise of 1832, but it was not until 1869 that this result was finally achieved.

In order to qualify for the parliamentary franchise, a man over twenty-one years of age had to occupy premises of the clear annual value of not less than £10 for twelve months before the last day of July, to have been rated to the Poor Rate for the same period, to have paid the rates up to April 6th, and to have resided within the borough, or within seven miles of it, for six months before July.²

In order to qualify for the municipal franchise, a man over twenty-one had to occupy premises for three years before August in any year, and to have been an inhabitant householder within the borough or seven miles of it, for the same time. He must have been rated in respect of his premises for the time of his occupation, that is three years, and have paid the rates for two and a half years.³

When the two franchises are compared, the municipal appears to be wider because there is no mention of a property qualification, but, as will be seen later, it actually enfranchised fewer people.

Two years before municipal reform in England, the Scottish Burgh Act⁴ had reformed the Corporations of that country and the parliamentary franchise of the £10 householder had been adopted for the new municipalities, but the Government was anxious to explain to the House of Commons that the English municipal franchise was to be wider. In the House of Commons Lord John Russell said:⁵ "It must have occurred to everyone who wishes that there should be a uniform franchise in corporations that the present parliamentary franchise of the £10 householder might be taken as the constituency in corporations . . . but it would expose that franchise to danger. It has produced a class of constituency which from property and intelligence is fit to be entrusted

¹ Reprinted by permission from *The Journal of Public Administration*, October 1936.

² 2 Will. IV, c. 45.

³ 3 & 4 Will. IV, c. 77.

⁴ 5 & 6 Will. IV, c. 76.

⁵ *Hansard*, June 5, 1835.

with the responsible duty of electing members to Parliament, and I think if we were to say that no others but those who possess that qualification should vote for corporations, we should arouse a feeling of enmity and jealousy against them as monopolizing all rights and powers to the exclusion of others that were as well entitled as themselves. In the next place, I think, we should consider those whom I may call the permanent ratepayers, the inhabitants of the town, as perfectly fit and qualified to choose persons to represent them in its common council and government." He went on to say that the lower class ratepayers were more open to bribery as concerns parliamentary elections, but, "I do not think that the same thing can be said when you place before them the propriety of choosing their own neighbours, perhaps their next-door neighbours, as persons fit to have a voice in the government of their own town." It will be remembered that the Bill, as introduced, had no property qualification for councillors, but that it was inserted later by the House of Lords. He then added another and a more conclusive reason. "These ratepayers do contribute and directly contribute to the expenses of the town," and, "those who contribute their money should have a voice in the election of persons by whom the money is spent." Justifying the condition of two and a half years' payment of rates, he said, "that it is but proper to have the permanent ratepayers of the town as the persons to elect the Council which is to have the government of the town yet, at the same time, it seems to be necessary to take some form of caution that they are neither persons who are occasionally suffering under that pressure of distress which obliges them to receive parochial relief, nor persons unable regularly or for a length of time to pay their rates."¹ Later in the discussion he refused to accept an amendment to extend the scope of the franchise by adding "Tenement" after "House, Warehouse, Counting-house and Shop," as, he said, "it would admit every place that was rated even at the lowest possible amount, and thereby entrust the franchise to a class of persons who might not exercise it in the manner contemplated in the Bill."²

When the Scottish Burgh Act was going through Parliament only two years before, the Government had laid stress upon the necessity for a uniform franchise for municipal and parliamentary electors, and had therefore resisted any amendments to reduce the qualification below £10 householders. The Lord Advocate argued in this connection that if the £5 householders were allowed to vote for the municipal boroughs, they would soon claim to vote for M.P.s, and he knew not on what principle the legislature could refuse them.³ In the same year, 1833, Lord

¹ *Hansard*, June 5, 1835.

² *Hansard*, June 26, 1833.

³ *Hansard*, June 22, 1835.

Brougham's abortive Bill to confer municipal government on thirty towns which had been given members of Parliament by the Reform Act, proposed that the franchise should be the same as the Parliamentary. It is not clear what happened in the intervening two years to make the Government give, what was popularly called "household suffrage," and which was meant to be an extended franchise, to municipal electors. Joseph Parkes, the Birmingham solicitor, who had been secretary of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations and who had much to do with the drafting of the Bill, writing to Lord Durham, said: "I was till twelve last night at Blackburne's chambers on our Corporation Report in which, *entre nous*, we shall distinctly recommend the new Durham suffrage for indeed we could get no sufficient electoral body by any other standard. But we have got to get over some of the Commissioners. All the strong heads and good principles are agreed—but we have a posse of Lord Brougham's men and weaker vessels who will not hold out." After he had succeeded in persuading the majority of the Commissioners, the Cabinet was a more difficult problem; "they swore in my presence that they would never agree to household franchise, but Ellice and I convinced Lord Melbourne and he converted them." This success was a great surprise to Parkes. "I never thought when we began with the Cabinet that we should spoon them with it. But it stays on their stomachs up to to-day; and tonics I hope will keep it down till the Bill is fairly launched in the House of Commons. Once there we are safe as a united party—come what may." Later he wrote, "However it is a smasher—a grand point to get household suffrage, and a thorough purge of the existing Corporations."¹

Francis Place, the radical tailor of Charing Cross, ran a weekly paper called *The Municipal Corporations Reformer* for a few months whilst the Bill was going through Parliament. In it he wrote that Lord John Russell had brought to the support of the new municipal franchise the immutable principle that representation should be co-extensive with taxation. Place objected to the "vexatious and useless ratemaking clause which cannot fail of producing extensive litigation and disfranchisement. Three years rating and payment for two years and a half are utterly unjustified by principle and precedent, and we should be dishonest commentators on the municipal Bill if we did not denounce this constantly extending invasion of popular rights in subservience to the Upper House." This must have referred to discussions in the Cabinet, for the House of Lords curiously enough made no attempt to alter the franchise. However, in the same number of his paper he said that the Bill was "a legislative proposition more perfect in principle and more extensive in its transfer

¹ *Joseph Parkes of Birmingham*, by Jessie Buckley, pp. 120-22.

and new distribution of political power than even the Reform Bill of 1831." And when the Bill went to the House of Lords, he wrote: "This great measure of social regeneration has, in all its principles, passed unscathed through the Committee of the House of Commons." It is clear, therefore, that he as well as Joseph Parkes thought that the municipal franchise would be considerably larger than the parliamentary franchise of 1832. This view was shared in the country, for at a meeting in Liverpool in support of the Bill, Mr. W. Rathbone said,¹ "It gives you all but universal suffrage." Other speakers added, "They say the franchise is too extensive, they see or affect to see a danger in allowing the 'mob,' as they call the people, to have a voice in municipal or political affairs." No serious objection to the scope of the franchise was made in the House of Commons. Peel recognized in all his speeches that the franchise was much wider than the parliamentary franchise, and Lord Lyndhurst, who fought bitterly many of the provisions of the Bill in the House of Lords, surprisingly said,² "that it was not his intention, nor he believed the intention of the noble Lords round him, to make any objection to the burgess qualification proposed by this Bill." This might, in view of his insistence upon a property qualification for councillors and life aldermen, have made the Radicals suspect that the franchise was not actually so democratic as it seemed to be, and in the earlier stages of the discussion in the Lower House Mr. Roebuck asked a very pertinent question. He said: "In a great many places persons are not rated who live in houses rated under £10 per annum. I wish to understand from the noble Lord what arrangements he meant to make with regard to persons of this description?" Lord John Russell's reply is stated by one reporter to have been "wholly inaudible,"³ although *Hansard* reports him as making a reply that still did not clear up the position. "Compounding" proved to be the chief reason why the franchise in practice was different from the franchise in theory.

The Bill was passed, burgess lists made out, and the result was very different from what had been expected. From an official return made in 1836,⁴ the local electorate in most towns was shown to be smaller than the parliamentary electorate. In a hundred and seventy-eight municipal boroughs there were 124,000 municipal voters, whereas in the hundred and twenty-six of them which were also parliamentary boroughs, there were 147,000 parliamentary voters.

The following figures give the comparison between the parliamentary

¹ *Municipal Corporations Reformer*, June 20, 1835.

² *Hansard* (House of Lords), August 14, 1835.

³ *Municipal Corporations Reformer*, June 13, 1835.

⁴ *Return to the House of Commons of Persons Qualified to Vote for Members of Parliament and Councillors*, 1836.

and the municipal electors for the five large towns which were incorporated at various dates from 1835 to 1843:—

<i>Town.</i>	<i>Parliamentary.</i>	<i>Municipal.</i>	<i>Population.</i>
¹ Birmingham, 1838	7,309 (1832)	5,023	180,000
² Leeds, 1835	5,052	6,762	120,000
³ Liverpool, 1835	11,283 7,655 (incl. 3,628 freemen)	5,838	185,000
⁴ Manchester, 1838	11,185	9,118	200,000 (estimated)
⁵ Sheffield, 1843	4,060	5,584	110,891

In three out of the five towns the municipal list was less than the parliamentary by about 2,000 voters; only the two Yorkshire towns had more municipal than parliamentary voters. This result seems to need explanation, for, with the exception of Creevey, who wrote in 1836, "There was never such a coup as this municipal reform has turned out to be. It marshals all the middle classes in all the towns of England in the ranks of Reform, aye and gives them monstrous powers too,"⁶ no other contemporary writer, except Harriet Martineau, and no politician, radical or chartist, seems to have realized the situation or made any protest. Three years later even, in 1838, when Richard Cobden was leading the movement for a charter for Manchester, he said,⁷ at a public meeting, "Every householder for three years paying however small an amount of rate is a member of the body corporate and has an equal vote for the election of council men, aldermen and mayor. I am aware that misrepresentations have gone abroad, but I pledge my word of honour that, by this Act, every individual, however low his assessment, shall have one vote." Referring to the election by the council of aldermen and mayor, he said, "Can there be anything more democratic or republican than that? It is universal suffrage; annual parliaments, and vote by ticket, if not vote by ballot." Later he referred to "the poor artisan who walks there (i.e. to the polling booth) perhaps slipshod and aproned from his garret or cellar."⁸ Cobden, as we know from a letter to Mr. Tait of Edinburgh,⁹ was doing his best, although without success, to win over

¹ Letter from Town Clerk.

² *English Municipal Institutions*, by Somers Vine.

³ *English Municipal Institutions*, by Somers Vine.

⁴ *Parliamentary and Burgess Lists*, Manchester Reference Library.

⁵ Letter from Town Clerk.

⁶ *The Creevey Papers*, edited by H. Maxwell, p. 650.

⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, February 10, 1838.

⁸ *Cobden as a Citizen*, by W. E. A. Axon, p. 35.

⁹ *Life of Richard Cobden*, by Lord Morley, abridged edition, p. 63.

the Radicals of Manchester in the fight for the charter, but he would hardly have intentionally misrepresented the facts. Three years after the passing of the Act, therefore, this misunderstanding about the franchise was possible, and many historians have, even up to the present day, perpetuated the fallacy that the 1835 franchise was more democratic than that of 1832. The two notable exceptions are the Sidney Webbs¹ and the J. L. Hammonds,² both of whom realized, from a study of the figures, that the electorate proved to be a middle-class one. Redlich and Hirst, however, say:³ "This Council was to be elected, according to the provisions of the Bill, by the equal and direct vote of the local ratepayers. . . . The municipal franchise was thus framed on a principle much more democratic than the parliamentary, for it gave the right to vote to all ratepayers who had resided in the town for three years." Professor Trevelyan in his *British History of the Nineteenth Century*, speaking of the Scottish Burghs Act, 1833, under which, as we have seen, the municipal franchise was that of the £10 householder, and explaining that Scotland insisted upon Corporation reform sooner than the sister country, says: "For this reason the new municipal electorate in England, by waiting two years longer, obtained the more democratic franchise of all who paid rates." And the author of an article in *The Times* in July of last year, describing the Municipal Corporations Act, wrote, "There was to be a single type of town council elected by all male ratepayers of three years' standing who resided within seven miles of the borough."

The mistake of those authorities seems to have arisen from the fact that, as there was no property qualification mentioned in the Act, and as the intention of its sponsors was clear, they did not find out what actually happened when the burgess lists were made out.

When we try to explain the result, we find that there were two reasons, unsuspected by the authors of the Act, for the difference in the electors' lists.

In the first place the parliamentary voter only had to occupy for twelve months instead of three years, and to have paid rates for six months instead of two and a half years. At this period there was a considerable movement of population, and Irish immigration in the north, although not so great as during the next decade, was continuous. But the long period of occupancy and ratepaying affected the middle as well as the working class. In the return of parliamentary and municipal voters made in 1836, to which reference has already been made, the Town Clerk of Richmond said that one reason why the number of municipal voters was less than that of the parliamentary in his borough was "requiring as

¹ *The Manor and the Borough*, p. 749.

² *The Age of the Chartist*, pp. 51, 52.

³ *English Local Government*, vol. i, p. 124.

a qualification the elector to be an inhabitant householder, three years' occupation previous to the registration and the payment of all rates to the relief of the poor during that time by which many of the best inhabitants are not only deprived of their franchise of burgess but are also rendered ineligible to hold office which they are otherwise well qualified to fill."

The second, and by far the more important, reason for the failure of the Municipal Act to enfranchise more people than the Reform Act, was the system of compounding for rates of houses between £20 and £6 rental which had first been introduced by an Act of 1819.¹ The reason for this provision was, that the payment of poor rates was often evaded by people living in houses let in lodgings or separate apartments because they were poor and did not stay long in one place. It was found that owners of that class of property often charged higher rents because their tenants could avoid payment of rates. The Act was permissive, that is to say it only came into operation where the vestry adopted it. When they did so decide, the owners of houses, apartments and dwellings which were let at rents of not less than £6 nor more than £20 for a term that was less than three months, were to be rated instead of the occupiers. In consideration of this arrangement they were to be allowed a deduction of not more than one half of the rates. A return made many years later showed that this Act had only been adopted in one or more parishes in seventeen parliamentary boroughs. The fact that it had not generally been adopted throughout the kingdom may account for there being no mention, apart from Mr. Roebuck's question, of its possible effect upon the franchise in the discussions in Parliament over the Municipal Corporations Act, and the Government may have thought that Section XI of that Act would deal adequately with the exceptional cases. This section gave an occupier the right to claim to be rated in respect of his premises whether or not the landlord was liable, and, if he paid the rate, his name was to be put on the rate book. But what Parliament does not seem to have realized was, that although the 1819 Act under which alone compounding agreements could be legally enforced, had not been universally adopted, there had grown up as a result of the Act a widespread custom of voluntary agreements between overseers and those landlords who, in return for a reduction, were ready to be responsible for the payment of rates on their property. Later these non-legal agreements caused difficulties to the overseers, but at this time they were numerous, although unequal in operation. In the same street one landlord might "compound" and others not, and the amount of the reduction allowed also varied.

The right to claim to be rated and thus to get on the burgess list would

¹ 59 Geo. III, c. 12.

of course, be known to very few, and would involve so much trouble and publicity that no one could have imagined that it would be widely exercised. There are few records of the revision courts of that time, but twenty-five years later a Manchester solicitor giving evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Lords,¹ stated that out of 33,000 assessments at £10 and under, in that city, only 200 occupiers claimed to be put on the municipal list.

Although there was no uniform practice, it is probable that overseers were not accustomed to put the names of compounded tenants on the various local voting lists. In 1834 the Churchwardens of Manchester consulted their legal adviser as to the effect of compounding on the respective rights of owners and tenants to vote at vestry meetings. He ruled against both, on the ground that as there was no legal compounding agreement, the owners were not the parties rated, and because the overseers had accepted a sum less than the whole rate the tenants, who were in law the parties rated, could not be held to have paid the whole rate! In his opinion the payment of the whole rate was implied. It will be remembered that Section IX of the Municipal Corporations Act said that no person who had occupied for the necessary time should be enrolled "unless he shall have been rated . . . to all rates for the relief of the poor, which he shall have paid." This would probably have been interpreted by those who were accustomed to exclude compounded tenants as additional justification for it, whether or not that had been the intention of Parliament. If only Lord John Russell's reply to Mr. Roebuck had been audible much later litigation and legislation might have been avoided. But this reason alone would not account for the exclusion of so many ratepayers because, at this date, compounding was not legal for houses below £6, probably owing to the opposition of landlords, who would wish to keep as many of their lowest rented houses as possible practically immune from rates. It seems never, however, to have been the custom to put this type of tenant on any voting list except in those corporations where he could qualify as a freeman. Even when he had fulfilled the condition of three years' occupancy and had paid rates, and kept free from Poor Law relief, he would hardly have been considered worthy of a vote. It was probably occupiers of this kind of property that Lord John Russell had in mind when he refused the amendment which by adding "tenement" to the list of qualifying premises would, he said, "entrust the franchise to a class of persons who might not exercise it in the manner contemplated by the Bill."

In order to get some idea of the number of ratepayers who were

¹ Report of Committee of House of Lords on the Probable Increase of Electors if Reduction of Franchise Made, 1860, p. 195, Sudlow's Evidence.

excluded by compounding agreements and by custom we may look at the township of Manchester, the largest of the five townships that made up the municipal borough of that name. In 1838, there were 34,000 assessments, of which only 9,000 were over £10. There were, however, only 6,600 municipal voters, but although compounding was not by any means general there were hardly any tenants below £10 on the list.

The procedure with regard to compounded tenants was not, however, universal. In some parts of the country it was held that so long as somebody paid the rates, the occupier had the right to vote, and in 1837 the issue was raised in the Courts.¹ At Bridgnorth, seventy men had been put on the burgess roll by the overseers, but the mayor, on revision, had them struck out as "none of the several parties had paid their respective rates themselves, but that the same had been paid for them by third parties." It was contended before the High Court that these rates had been paid by persons belonging to a political party in the borough and, it was believed, for political purposes. Evidence was given that many of the people had been unable to pay their rates themselves when called upon to do so during the three years, and also that many of them did not know that their rates had been paid. The Lord Chief Justice, in upholding the mayor's ruling, said: "We ought to promulgate our opinion on this subject without delay. If the practice described were to prevail, there would be great danger of the most enormous bribery. The statute, in requiring that the rates shall have been paid, contemplates some payment by the party's own act." It seems curious that he made no distinction between payment of rates by an outside person, and payment by the landlord under a compounding agreement. Whether this decision in 1837 was given much publicity, or whether, in most parts of the country, direct payment of rates had been assumed necessary for the burgess qualification, the question was not finally settled until 1878.²

In 1850, the Act³ for better assessing and collecting the Poor Rates and Highway Rates in respect of small tenements extended compounding to houses under £6 as it had been found "expensive, difficult and frequently impracticable" to collect the Poor Rates from such property. But a special clause, alien to the general purpose of the Bill was introduced during its passage through Parliament, which said that where the owner instead of the occupier was rated, and the owner had paid the rates, the occupier was to be entitled to all municipal privileges under the 1835 Act to which he would have been entitled if he had himself been rated and had paid the rates. This therefore secured the municipal vote to the lowest ratepayer if he had occupied premises for three years. This Act,

¹ *Reg. v. Mayor of Bridgnorth*, Revised Reports, vol. 50, p. 334.

² 41 & 42 Vic., c. 26.

³ 13 & 14 Vic., c. 99.

which was permissive, was adopted in more than 5,000 parishes.¹ But the attitude of the overseers in Manchester may not have been unusual. They were told by their clerk that if they adopted it 10,000 tenants living in houses under £6 rental would be added to the burgess list. This would outnumber the existing voters which were 8,000, and it would be very unfair to the compounded tenants between £6 and £20 who were not on the list. As there were 19,000 assessments below £6, it was calculated that more than half these tenants would qualify on occupation. The overseers decided that, as by compounding voluntarily and by ordinary methods they were able to collect more than half of the rates from this class of property, they would prefer to go on as before rather than face the "serious results which are likely to arise in all corporate towns from such a class of voters."²

Nine years later a Select Committee of the House of Lords inquired into the operation of this Act. They reported that it had made a great change in the 1835 system for, according to them, the Municipal Corporations Act intended the direct payment of rates by the householder himself to be a necessary condition of obtaining the vote. They found that the Small Tenements Act, as it was called, had been useful in collecting rates, but had caused a serious deterioration in the character of the electorate. It had admitted the lowest grade of voters, Irish immigrants, who were open to bribery by drink and breakfasts, and it had introduced bribed canvassers.³

A ridiculous position had now arisen. Tenants of compounded houses below £6 in the 5,000 parishes which had adopted the Small Tenements Act, were expressly entitled to the municipal vote, whereas those occupying houses between £6 and £20 whether compounded for by legal agreement or by voluntary arrangement, were usually omitted from the burgess list. In 1858, therefore, an Act to amend the municipal franchise in certain cases⁴ was passed. This said that those tenants who were compounded for under the 1819 Act, i.e. those occupying houses between £6 and £20 were also to have the municipal franchise. Even now the question was not yet settled. Manchester, for instance, had never adopted —legally—either the 1819 Act or the 1850 Act, and so the 1858 Act was taken not to apply to voluntary compounding! There may have been other places that were equally determined to keep the franchise as high as possible, and they were successful for another eleven years.

In 1869, two Acts were passed which affected the municipal franchise. The Act⁵ to shorten the term of residence as a qualification for the

¹ *Poor Rate Assessments and Collection Act, 1869*, by Hugh Owen, Junior.

² *Churchwardens and Overseers Board Book*, January 3, 1851.

³ *British Parliamentary Papers, 1859*.

⁴ 21 & 22 Vic., c. 43.

⁵ 32 and 33 Vic., c. 55.

municipal franchise reduced the period of occupancy from three years to one year, thus making it the same as the parliamentary qualification. This Act also gave the municipal vote to single or widowed women, if they fulfilled the necessary qualifications. The other Act¹ to amend the law with respect to Rating of Occupiers of short terms and the making and collecting of the Poor Rate, re-introduced compounding, which had been abolished in 1867. The upper limits were fixed at £20 for London, £13 for Liverpool, £10 in Manchester, and £8 for the rest of the country and there was no lower limit. For the first time the overseers were instructed, whether or not the rate was compounded for, to enter the occupier's name in the rate book and, "such occupier shall be deemed to be duly rated for any qualification or franchise as aforesaid." This meant that, for the first time the period of occupation of any tenant was known and all doubts and difficulties connected with the compounded tenant should have disappeared. It was in 1867, it will be remembered, that the £10 qualification for a parliamentary vote was abolished by Disraeli's government, and male household suffrage instituted. In 1870, therefore, the two franchises were brought together and there was an excess of municipal over parliamentary voters for the first time owing to the inclusion of women. But there seems to have been still uncertainty about the compounded tenant, and in the case of both the parliamentary and the municipal franchise, they were often deprived of their votes. In 1878 a Parliamentary and Municipal Registration Act² was therefore passed in order to remove all doubts about both franchises. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1882³ consolidated all the previous Acts, and no change was made in the conditions of the franchise until 1918,⁴ when the qualifications were made of six months' occupancy as owner or tenant of land or premises within the area. This was reduced to three months in 1926.⁵ Married women were enfranchised on their husbands' qualifications for premises in which they both reside. Now once more the municipal franchise is narrower than the parliamentary, for that has become complete adult suffrage.

In view of the many vicissitudes through which the municipal franchise has passed during the century, it is interesting to speculate upon the intentions of the government in 1835 when they settled the qualifications in that Act. Evidently the franchise was meant to be wider than the existing parliamentary franchise, but how much wider is not clear. Adult suffrage, which was one of the points of the Chartist agitation of that time, was held in horror by the Whigs, and "household suffrage" is the term

¹ 32 & 33 Vic., c. 41.

² 41 and 42 Vic., c. 26.

³ 45 & 46 Vic., c. 50.

⁴ 7 & 8 Geo. V, c. 64 (Rep. of People Act).

⁵ 16 & 17 Geo. V, c. 9.

used in connection with the Municipal Corporations Act. Was this meant to differ from adult suffrage merely by reason of the long period of occupation and of rate-paying? Did Lord John Russell think that this alone would ensure the electors being the "permanent ratepayers," or had he some lower limit in mind? His refusal to accept the amendment to add "Tenement" to "House, Warehouse, Counting-house and Shop," as a description of the premises to be occupied, suggests that he had in his mind a "class of persons" whom he wished to exclude. There is no definition of "Tenement" that would confine it to the poorest type of house, and many separate cottages were rated below £6, but it is perhaps significant that although the 1819 Act refers to "houses, apartments and dwellings" between £20 and £6 rental, the 1850 Act which extended compounding below £6 was called the "Act for better assessing and collecting Poor Rates and Highway Rates in respect of small Tenements." The term was therefore probably connected with houses let in single rooms to the poorest families in any town. Lord John Russell never intended these people, even if they had occupied and paid rates for the requisite period and kept clear of the Poor Law, to have votes for the Town Council, so we may infer that those that he meant to enfranchise were the occupiers of premises between £10 and £6 rental.

It still remains to explain the failure of the Act to effect this result. Although Lord John Russell by referring to the new electors as people "who contribute and directly contribute to the rates," may have meant to exclude compounded tenants, neither he, nor Joseph Parkes, who was so elated at the prospect of the new franchise, can have had any idea of the extent of compounding by voluntary agreements, if not by legal ones, nor of the general attitude of overseers to the composition of voting lists.

When the Act was passed, the question of who should be put on the burgess list of each town rested with the overseers. Registration was in its infancy, and it was many years before even parliamentary lists, which were everywhere considered of much greater importance than municipal lists, were complete. Apart from those towns in which the Freeman had the right of voting for a Member of Parliament, overseers would be inclined to think that as £10 had been fixed as the lowest qualification for a parliamentary vote, the House of Commons had intended that as the limit for the municipal vote as well. In the large towns the vestry meetings and the public meetings which passed the Constables' Accounts were usually attended by small numbers of the "respectable inhabitants," as the minutes record, and the various bodies of Police and Improvement Commissioners that had sprung up during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had, by 1835, usually come to be elected on a property qualification. Overseers were not accustomed to think of the ordinary working

man as one who should be given a vote and, where there was no compounding agreement little attempt was made even to collect rates from houses below £10. In some towns, as in Manchester, houses at £4 10s. od. rental and less were exempted by law from the Police Rate,¹ and the Poor Law Commissioners reported in 1834 that, throughout the country many of the poorer working-class houses were, in fact, exempt from the Poor Rate because of the difficulty of collection. Even in those areas where this was not the case, and where compounding agreements were voluntarily made for property below the legal limit of £6 as well as up to £20, the overseers would have no way of checking the names and periods of occupation of the tenants. This would have meant much labour and would hardly have been undertaken without much pressure. Burgess lists were probably made up from lists that each collector brought in from his district. He would, from memory, write up the names of those who had occupied for the necessary three years and paid rates for two and a half, the compounded tenants he would only know through the landlord as representing so many houses and so much money, and those who were living in houses under £10 and were not compounded for, he would not consider as possible voters, because they were not parliamentary voters. The opinion of the Manchester overseers, when they had to decide whether or not to adopt the Act of 1850 by which compounded tenants below £6 would be given a vote, was probably typical of the general attitude fifteen years earlier to the ordinary working man, and to the danger of enfranchising such a "class of voters." What, however, is clear, is that there was no uniformity of practice in making up burgess lists. The Return of 1836 giving the number of parliamentary and municipal electors for England and Wales shows that, although for the country as a whole, there were fewer municipal than parliamentary voters, this did not apply to every place. A detailed analysis of the two lists with the rate books would be necessary in order to find out how the differences arose.

The fact emerges, however, that owing to a desire for the better collection of rates, the intention of the government to enfranchise rate-payers somewhat below the £10 qualification substantially failed. Nothing was done about it until 1850 when, almost inadvertently, the Small Tenements Act enfranchised the poorest class of occupier, namely those below £6 rental. The other compounded tenants, those between £6 and £20, had to wait until 1858 for the same rights, and neither of these classes, nor those who were under voluntary agreements like the occupiers in Manchester, were really secure until the Act of 1869 insisted upon the names of the occupiers being entered in the rate book in all cases.

¹ 32 Geo. III, c. 69.

Whatever may have been the explanation of the administrative failure to implement the franchise sections of the 1835 Act, it is curious that there was no contemporary protest when the result became known. Why did not Joseph Parkes, in whose own town of Birmingham¹ no one below a £10 householder was put on the burgess list, realize that something had gone wrong? When Cobden, who was an Alderman of Manchester, found that the municipal voters of that town only numbered 9,000 against 11,000 parliamentary, and that not one occupant of a cellar or garret was on the list, why did he do nothing? And why did not Francis Place and the Radicals in Parliament, when the Return of 1836 was presented, call for an inquiry? The only explanation seems to be that once the Act was passed very little further interest was taken in municipal affairs by Members of Parliament. The government, after its burst of democratic fervour soon returned to the safety of the middle-class vote, and when it introduced the Irish Corporations Bill of 1839 the franchise was found to be the parliamentary one of the £10 householder. In vain the Irish members fought for the English municipal franchise.² Increasing fear of the Chartists, who were becoming more violent in their demands, may also have frightened those who had worked for the wider municipal franchise, and the thought of trusting the police forces to the control of a large and untried electorate, may have kept them from raising the question.

The Chartists themselves, whose programme included adult suffrage and who might have been expected to take up the question, were not interested in municipal government, and in many cases were actively hostile to the demand for a charter for those towns that were not incorporated under the Act. They were entirely occupied with the reform of Parliament, and it is perhaps hardly surprising that they should have seen no further than their contemporaries into the future possibilities of local government. Most of the larger industrial towns were not incorporated until several years after 1835, and even those that gained their charter in 1838, i.e. Manchester, Birmingham and Bolton, had bodies of Improvement Commissioners that were not absorbed by the Councils until later. These bodies still carried on much of the local government work of the time, with the exception of the control of the Police, which was automatically transferred to the new Corporations. The Surveyors of Highways were also a separate body, and so, of course, was the Poor Law, upon which the Chartists in so far as they took any interest in local government, directed their attention. Throughout the century the fight for popular rights centred round the parliamentary franchise, and the municipal

¹ *History of the Corporation of Birmingham*, by Bunce, vol. i, p. 295.

² *Hansard*, June 28, July 4, 1839.

franchise which was launched on a more democratic basis than the parliamentary, was actually beaten in the race towards household suffrage by the latter, by two years.

It is usual to criticize the new town councils on the ground that, until recently, they neglected the interests of the working classes and spent the rates largely on those services that were demanded by the middle classes. There are certainly grounds for such criticism, but when we realize that the franchise until 1869 was a middle-class franchise, that it was four years after the grant of household suffrage that vote by ballot was introduced, and that it was not until 1882, that the property qualification for councillors was abolished, we can hardly be surprised if the outlook of the councils was a middle-class one. In fact, it is more surprising that, in the early 'forties, Manchester, supposed to be the home of *laissez-faire*, took wide powers under private Acts to "interfere" with the rights of property by insisting upon certain sanitary regulations in the building of houses, and restrictions on the hours of opening of public houses and the sale of spirits to young people. In an article on Local Legislation,¹ Dr. Gibbon says: "It is noteworthy that Manchester, though incorporated as late as 1838, obtained by a local Act of 1844 one of the earliest municipal sanitary codes, which was largely followed by the General Act of 1848. Manchester also, by an Act of 1845, was one of the first places to be empowered to acquire property for sanitary improvements, a power now made general."

¹ *Journal of Public Administration*, July 1925.

APPENDIX II—*Population, Annual Rates*

TABLE I.—MANCHESTER—ESTIMATED POPULATION, ANNUAL RATES OF SPECIFIED CAUSES, AND (c) INFANTILE MORTALITIES; ALSO DEATHS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS; ALSO QUINQUENNIAL AVERAGES

Year.	Estimated Population (Mean)	Marriage Rate per 1,000 persons living	Annual Rates per 1,000 persons living					
			Births	Deaths (all causes)	Smallpox	Malaria	Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria
Quinquennial Average	1871-1875	24.6	38.9	28.3	0.26	0.64	1.08	0.08
	1876-1880	18.6	38.7	26.2	0.24	0.53	1.07	0.13
	1881-1885	17.9	35.1	23.6	0.04	0.71	0.48	0.10
	1886-1890	16.6	33.4	24.6	0.02	0.83	0.50	0.32
	1891-1895	16.9	33.2	23.6	0.03	0.62	0.26	0.27
	1896-1900	18.2	32.5	22.7	—	0.89	0.20	0.13
	1901-1905	17.4	30.9	20.1	0.01	0.55	0.19	0.22
	1906-1910	17.0	28.1	17.7	—	0.54	0.16	0.17
	1911-1915	17.6	24.8	16.4	—	0.50	0.12	0.14
	1916-1920	16.7	19.2	14.1	—	0.24	0.04	0.08
	1921-1925	16.8	20.6	13.9	—	0.25	0.06	0.10
	1926-1930	17.3	17.4	13.8	—	0.18	0.02	0.11
	1931-1935	16.8	15.0	13.1	—	0.11	0.02	0.10
1932	16.0	15.4	13.0	—	0.16	0.02	0.11	
1933	16.7	14.4	13.4	—	0.06	0.02	0.11	
1934	17.9	14.8	12.2	—	0.13	0.02	0.11	
1935	17.2	14.5	12.9	—	0.13	0.02	0.07	
1936	17.7	14.7	13.5	—	0.16	0.01	0.12	

The populations and rates prior to 1891 are those for the Unions of Manchester, "Manchester." The City was extended to include Moss Side and Withington in April 1931.

of Marriages, Births and Deaths, etc.

MARRIAGES, BIRTHS, AND DEATHS (a) FROM ALL CAUSES, (b) FROM THE PERCENTAGES TO TOTAL DEATHS OF INQUEST CASES AND OF 1871-1936

Whooping Cough	Annual Rates per 1,000 persons living					Percentage to Total Deaths		Year.	
	Typhus Fever	Enteric Fever	Simple Continued Fever	Diarrhoeal Diseases	Violence	Inquest Cases	Deaths in Public Institutions		
0.78	0.14	0.43	0.21	1.95	0.94	7.2	13.4	198	1871-1875
0.84	0.08	0.29	0.11	1.26	0.89	7.5	14.3	172	1876-1880
0.68	0.05	0.20	0.03	0.99	0.72	7.0	15.9	175	1881-1885
0.54	0.02	0.30	0.01	1.08	0.78	6.9	17.7	183	1886-1890
0.64	0.00	0.24	0.01	1.19	0.77	7.1	19.2	186	1891-1895
0.53	0.00	0.18	0.01	1.69	0.73	7.1	20.2	192	1896-1900
0.41	0.00	0.13	0.00	1.15	0.72	7.1	24.4	173	1901-1905
0.37	0.00	0.10	0.00	0.76	0.68	7.4	27.3	147	1906-1910
0.25	—	0.05	—	0.84	0.67	7.9	30.8	133	1911-1915
0.21	—	0.02	0.00	0.30	0.49	6.4	32.3	105	1916-1920
0.20	—	0.01	—	0.33	0.44	5.7	37.8	95	1921-1925
0.14	—	0.01	—	0.24	0.46	4.8	42.9	88	1926-1930
0.08	—	0.00	—	0.15	0.46	5.0	48.5	77	1931-1935
0.10	—	0.01	—	0.15	0.52	5.7	47.6	85	1932
0.06	—	0.00	—	0.13	0.46	5.0	47.8	75	1933
0.05	—	0.00	—	0.17	0.42	4.9	49.1	69	1934
0.06	—	0.00	—	0.11	0.42	4.6	51.2	71	1935
0.06	—	0.00	—	0.09	0.46	4.7	52.2	77	1936

Chorlton, and Prestwich, which have been taken as approximately representing November 1904, Gorton and Levenshulme in November 1909, and Wythenshawe,

TABLE II.

MANCHESTER.—ANNUAL RATES OF MORTALITY FROM CERTAIN CAUSES OF DEATH.

Year	Cause	Annual Rates per 1,000 persons living										Rates per 1,000 Births
		Diseases of Nervous System					Diseases of Blood Vessels		Diseases of Respiratory System			
Diseases of Tuberculosis		Pluritis		Other Tubercles	Diseases of Heart and Blood Vessels		Diseases of Dental Vesicles	Diseases of Dermatological System		Diseases of Genito-urinary System	Diseases of Gastro-intestinal System	
1932	1.64	0.02	1.00	0.15	0.43	3.62	1.98	0.46	0.49	0.02	1.45	2.02
1933	1.52	0.02	1.00	0.13	0.41	3.90	1.97	0.47	0.50	0.06	1.45	3.42
1934	1.60	0.02	0.97	0.14	0.37	3.77	1.47	0.45	0.47	0.06	1.25	3.00
1935	1.68	0.02	0.92	0.10	0.41	3.62	1.73	0.48	0.44	0.04	2.03	1.61
1936	1.62	0.02	0.87	0.12	0.39	4.10	1.83	0.50	0.49	0.07	1.69	3.29

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